

Alvin Cook

Japan

the final agony



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Japan:



he final agony



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Sowing the wind

Introduction by Barrie Pitt

In the pages which follow, the reader will find a fascinating account of the final year of Japan's conflict with the Western Powers. I think perhaps it might be as well to outline very briefly the events which led up to the disasters which then engulfed the island race.

In December 1941 Japan went to war against America - and, inevitably, Great Britain and the Commonwealth - basically for oil. During the previous four years she had fought a long and semi-successful war against China supplied in essential metals and fuels primarily by America and the Netherlands, and now those supplies had been abruptly cut off. Japan was thus faced either with abandonment of her hard-won gains of four years' fighting, together with a loss of prestige and face which no Eastern nation could afford, or with the tasks essential to the attainment of other sources of supply.

The second alternative was the one she chose, attaining the sources of oil and the equally essential clear passageway for the oil back to the homeland in an astonishing explosion of military energy which menaced the borders of India, completely contained the Dutch Eastern Empire and brushed

the north coast of Australia, beside controlling half of the Pacific Ocean. Domination over this vast area was almost all achieved within six months of the attack on Pearl Harbor, but at the end of this period Japan was extending her military strength to its utmost limit; she resembled a man lying on a floor, holding the four doors of a room shut, one with each foot, one with each hand, hoping that the pressures on the doors would never be enough to force any of them open.

This was, obviously, a weak posture - though it did not appear so to the hard-pressed Allies, who during 1942 were experiencing Fortune's ebb and who, by the middle of that year, appeared to be in desperate straits. However, this period was in fact, the hinge of fate, and in June 1942 the Battle of Midway was fought - though only a few people (including, surprisingly, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito) realized its immense significance. For many months to come it appeared to the watching world that Japan dominated the Pacific and, indeed, the vast area known to Europeans as the Far East, but in fact, the weakness of her posture made her totally dependent for continued existence on the victories of her German

ally, and once the destruction of the Third Reich became inevitable, Japan's days of power were numbered.

As it happened, geography determined that the early efforts of the Americans and Australians to repel the Japanese danger could wreak little apparent harm on the new Eastern Empire. The great naval campaigns mounted by the Americans were at first attacking Japan in the most unimportant areas; she could afford to lose a myriad of South Pacific islands, so long as the areas in the west - Java, Sumatra, Borneo and the seaways north of the Philippines, and the essential shield of islands to the south of the homeland - remained under her control.

But inexorably, Allied attacks crept nearer and nearer to the vital areas. To use Dr Coox's words, 'By the summer of 1944 Japan's "absolute zone of national defense" in the central Pacific was pierced fatally when Saipan, Guam and Tinian fell to American invasion forces, and "Hell was upon us when we lost Saipan," the chief of the Japanese Naval General Staff admitted. By the end of October 1944, American divisions had landed at Leyte, by December they had reached Mindoro, and the following month they invaded Luzon itself.

One quickly exhausts superlatives when describing the bravery and stubborn determination of Japanese troops, for they fought with fanaticism in every field and on every occasion. As Field-Marshal Slim has said, the strength of the Japanese army lay in the spirit of the individual soldier: 'He fought and marched till he died . . . it was this combination of obedience and ferocity that made the Japanese army, whatever its condition, so formidable . . .' To the Japanese soldier or sailor, surrender was unthinkable, death 'as light as a feather'.

What social system produced fighters of this calibre? A system, alas, as authoritarian as any in history, under the control of a military fascism. At the lofty apex of the societal

pyramid was the monarch who, in his capacity as emperor-patriarch-priest, symbolized the spiritual and temporal prescriptions of the Constitution promulgated under Meiji in the 19th Century; he was sacred and inviolable and, as head of the Empire, combined in himself the rights of sovereignty. In actual fact, Emperor Hirohito was a humane, intelligent and hard-working individual - but he was a prisoner of the system over which he nominally presided.

The government was of the European cabinet-responsibility type, under a premier minister, but in fact the army and navy exerted decisive influence through their power to withhold or to bestow cabinet service ministers drawn from the active general or flag lists, and also through their separate, direct access to the throne. Wartime conditions had reduced the two chamber parliament to the status of a rubber stamp, and the so-called demands of national security meant, in effect, that what power they possessed in theory became subservient to the pressures of the military and industrial complex.

To keep them - and indeed the entire Japanese race - under strict control were the formations of the dreaded Special Higher Police - the awful embodiment of Orwell's Thought Police. These mercilessly hunted down suspected defeatists and subversives and, aided by complete control of all information media, successfully deluded the public with stories of never-ending strings of victories at trifling cost. Disciplined, uncomplaining, indefatigable and tough, the Japanese produced some of the most skilful and fanatical fighters in the Second World War. The Japanese civilian of all ages was expected to match the example of sacrifice of the Imperial Armed Forces, and his government never ceased reminding him of his duty of blind obedience.

This was the race whose leaders had sown the wind. Now they were to reap the whirlwind.

The year of doom opens; Tojo's appreciation

'The worst condition in which a belligerent can be placed,' wrote Clausewitz, 'is that of being completely disarmed. If, therefore, the enemy is to be reduced to submission . . . he must either be positively disarmed or placed in such a position that he is threatened with it'. We now know that, as early as the spring of 1943, the Emperor himself sensed that Japan was indeed confronted by what Clausewitz called 'the worst condition'. Although few others knew about or comprehended it at the time, the monarch realized that the battle of Midway, lost without publicity in June 1942, had already doomed Japan. 'The future of this war is not bright', the Emperor told the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. 'The vast battle zone will be breached in many places, without air supremacy'. In April 1944, the royal prince Mikasa suggested that the military consider declaring Kyoto and Nara open cities. At the same time General Ushiroku, senior deputy chief of Army General Staff (AGS), admitted to insiders that the empire's crisis could be expected in June and July of 1944, a view shared by Prince Kaya.

These anxieties proved well-founded. By the summer of 1944, Japan's 'absolute zone of national defense' in the central Pacific was pierced fatally when Saipan, Guam and Tinian fell to American invasion forces. 'Hell was upon us when we lost Saipan,' the chief of the Japanese naval general staff (NGS) later admitted. Upon hearing of the defeat in the Marianas, the head of the army's vital military affairs bureau, Lieutenant-General Muto, told his aide, 'Japan is defeated'. One Japanese colonel noted in his secret diary that Saipan marked the turning point, both for Japan and for the Greater East Asia War as a whole. A distinctly troubled Emperor convened his senior military and naval advisers in late June. Fiery Premier Tojo - he who had led the country into war in 1941, but by now may have been marked for assassination within the army - resigned reluctantly in July 1944, admitting that 'the present cabinet was not able to achieve its objective.' On 24th September, US Superfortresses began to bomb Japan's main islands from bases in

Emperor Hirohito





Prince Mikasa



General Tojo

the Marianas; the new prime minister, Koiso, warned that the people would do well to consider the possibility of enemy landings on home soil. When Japanese Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) gave up on Leyte, in December 1944, even Japanese sources admit that the overall outcome of the Pacific war had been decided and that there was no further hope of frustrating the Allies. Iwo Jima was invaded on 19th February 1945. To the Greater Tokyo area from Iwo was only about 700 miles; 'if the island falls,' warned the deputy chief of the AGS, 'Tokyo will become a battleground in a month.' On 7th April, Superfortresses began raids on Japan from the conquered island. The seizure of Okinawa, begun on 1st April, brought the Allies 325 miles from Japanese cities. 'The knowledge that the homeland was left wide open to air-attack,' remarked Shigemitsu, foreign minister under Koiso, 'came as a thunderbolt to the whole nation'.

Nevertheless, it could only be through the translation of military and economic pressures into political events that the Allies could achieve their war objectives of bringing about the unconditional surrender of Japan. And the Japanese army considered itself undefeated. In the spring of 1945, at a PoW camp for Allied captives near Mukden, Japanese officers told the prisoners that if they observed all rules for the next ten or twenty years, their relatives might be permitted to come from home to visit them. On Taiwan, long-imprisoned General Jonathan Wainwright was assured by a cocky Japanese colonel: 'You have no chance of beating Japan . . . it took twenty thousand American troops to defeat two thousand Japanese soldiers on Attu island . . . there are a hundred million people in the Japanese empire. It will take ten times one hundred million to defeat Japan. To move such a force against Japan, even if you had that many warriors, would be impossible. It will therefore become a matter of generations'.

Such convictions were nurtured not only for the benefit of prisoners. Colonel Kazuyoshi Obata, Eighteenth Army staff officer, later told American interrogators: 'I thought that the war would continue three or four years [beyond 1945] because, although the Japanese national power was far below standard, it was considered that if the scene of war should shift near Japan, and the ratio of power was 1 : 100 [against Japan] this would be insufficient to carry out a successful operation against the homeland. In New Guinea the ratio was about 1 : 250 but, although the war was going badly for the Japanese [there], it was thought that the battle for the homeland would be difficult, would require years and, with the help of Manchuria, would be fought to a draw.'

The Japanese public had been told much the same thing. Propagandists claimed that the supernatural abilities of Japanese troops were known to have caused untold numbers of cases of mental derangement and suicide among American soldiers, who suffered from morbid fear and nervous breakdown. Psychological tests of Allied prisoners, it was claimed, had demonstrated that 'the Yankees are cry-babies'. Even the Throne was given a heavy dose of bombast when ex-Premier Tojo was received in private audience for over an hour on 26th February 1945. Although 130 B-29s had raided the capital in a snowstorm only the day before, Tojo exuded confidence. Although Manila had been abandoned, Japanese forces in the Philippines had concentrated in the mountains and would fight a delaying campaign of considerable dimensions. The Americans were employing twelve divisions in the Philippines; only ten more US divisions were available in the Pacific theater in reserve. The Americans had 'recklessly' landed on Iwo Jima but, whereas US forces had been able to stage carrier attacks against Saipan for a week in 1944, the

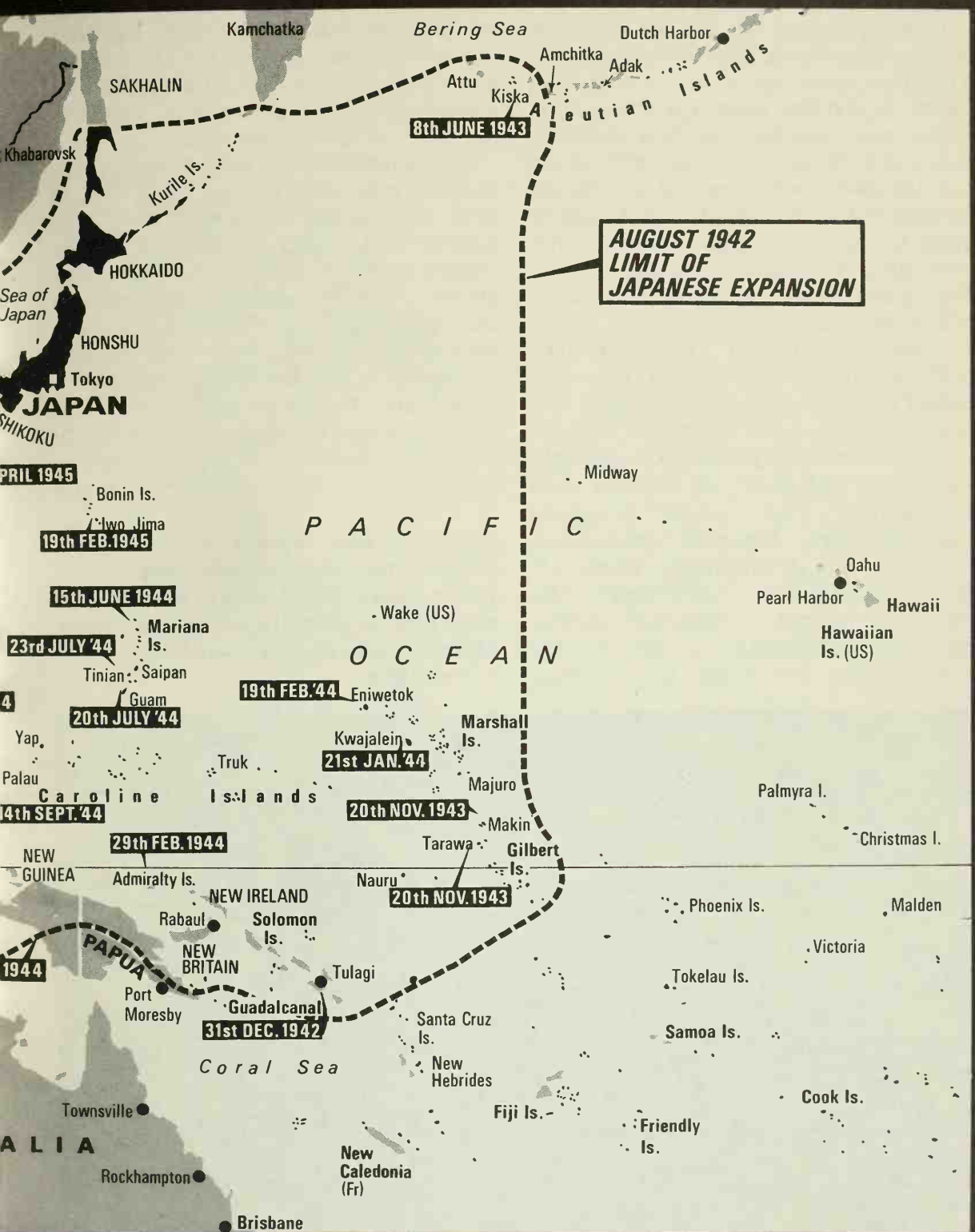
Americans now could only soften up Iwo on the first day or two; they lacked strength to do more. Tojo suggested that, if enemy task forces were to attack in the offshore reaches of the homeland, they could probably maintain the tempo for no more than a day and a half. Hundreds of enemy planes had raided Japan on the 25th, but how many more days could this type of offensive be sustained? As a matter of fact, the enemy had not even reappeared on the 26th. [*Sic*: As of 11am, merely]. This was because the Americans lacked the power, and because their objectives were fundamentally political. Japanese war preparations could be described as 'half successful'; while one should not be optimistic, there was no cause to be pessimistic.

At the Teheran conference in 1943, continued Tojo, the enemy had decided upon offensives in the Pacific and on the Asian continent, as well as upon the bringing-in of the Soviets if possible. Fortunately, however, the Japanese had been able to stifle Allied intentions on the continent, as demonstrated by the diminution in enemy bombing operations from Chinese bases. As for the Russians, it had been feared they might intervene in 1942, but this danger had never come to pass, and the Allies had still not prevailed on the Soviets to come into the Pacific war. Thus, Tojo argued, Japan had thwarted two of the three Allied objectives described earlier. With respect to the third problem - the situation in the Pacific - Tojo called it serious but, when viewed from Japan's overall standpoint, a fifty-fifty success. Anglo-American hopes of knocking out Germany by the end of 1944 had been utterly upset, as had Japan's own fears of such an eventuality. By fighting on, the Germans were draining off immense American and British strength. Hence the Western Allies were unable to shift forces to the Pacific theater. As a matter of fact, there was evidence of contradictions in US-British opera-



rcator's Projection

pan's empire and the battles that marked its decline



tions and political strategy.

Tojo professed to derive comfort from comparisons of production data. American iron and steel output was under 80,000,000 tons for the year, while coal production had dropped below 600,000,000 tons. Aircraft manufacture had been targeted at 120,000 in 1942 but only 100,000 had actually been turned out. The figure might even drop to 74,000 or 75,000 in 1945. The Americans' mobilization capability had reached their limits. From a total population of 120,000,000, 11,700,000 had been drafted into the armed services, and 60,000,000 into the labor force. But the US white population numbered only 80,000,000, and this was about the same as Japan's own population. One could conclude that although Japanese production strength had diminished, America's was dropping too. Admittedly, the enemy could not be matched battleship for battleship or carrier for carrier, but he could be matched

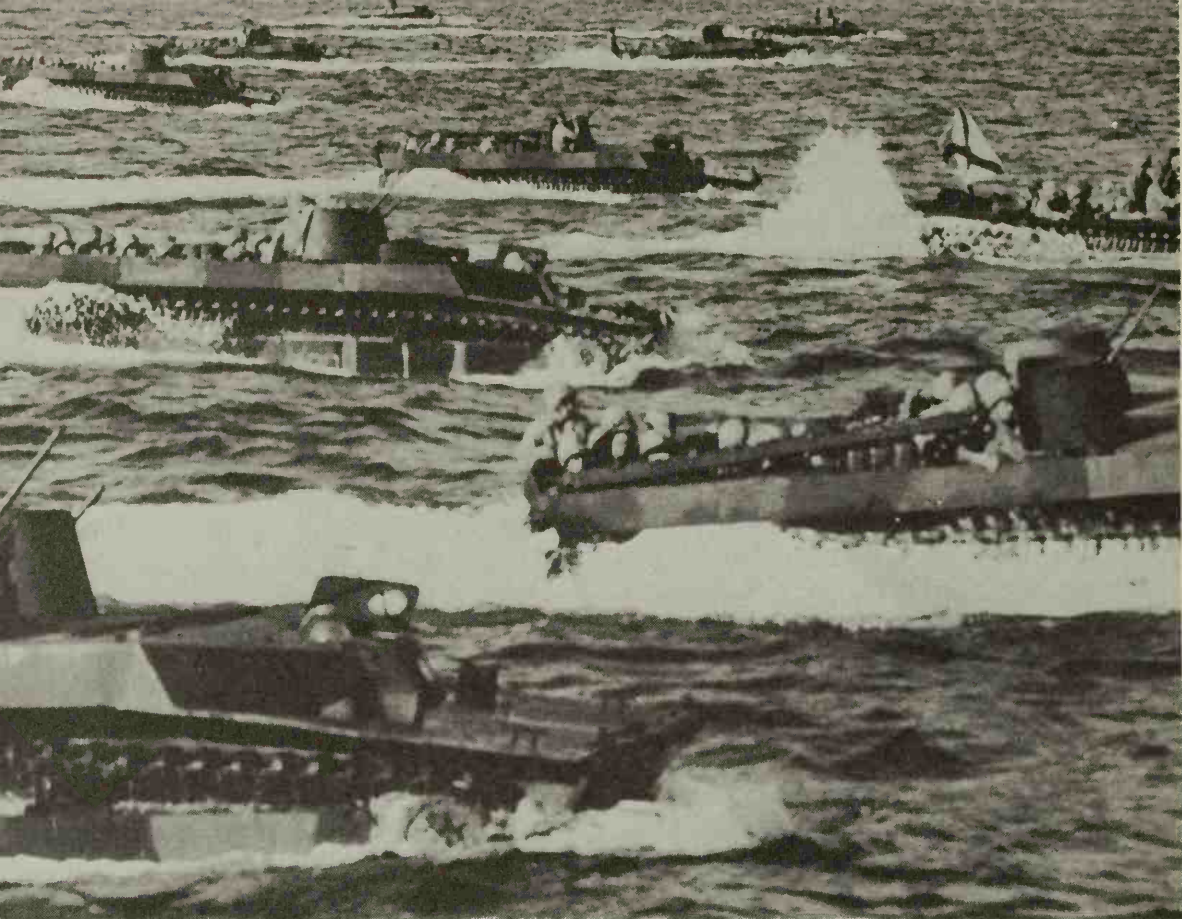
cheaply by explosives, and by planes or speedboats employing suicide-attack tactics. The closer the enemy got to the homeland, the longer his supply lines would become, and the shorter the defenders' own.

His appreciation might sound excessively favorable, said Tojo, but it was important to note that the enemy had his problems too, while Japan possessed reserves of operational strength against the threat of the next two months, a particular period of danger. Tojo was clearly disturbed by evidence of unwarranted defeatism. The unfavorable war situation and intensified bombings, coupled with subversive enemy propaganda, had caused uneasiness among

Below : Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako greet the crowds at their Tokyo palace. Right : One of the war's most celebrated pictures ; United States Marines raise the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima







Above: Amtracs move towards the Iwo Jima beaches. **Right:** Marines of the 4th Division disembark

the populace. Nevertheless, until now, the Allies' operations in the Pacific were directed against the outer defense zone and the territories only recently attached to Japan, such as the Mandates or occupied districts. The invasion of Iwo Jima represented the first time the Allies had set foot on true Imperial soil but, even here, their *bragadoccio* was evident: although they had talked, at the outset, about defeating Japan in four weeks, they had only come as far as Iwo Jima four years later. The enemy air offensive was not overwhelming to date. According to press information, 4,000 planes were in action against Germany but, so far, only about 100 B-29s could strike Japan, once in five to seven days, at ranges of over 2,000 kilometers. Teaming of enemy bombers and fighters, based upon task forces, had begun recently but

would not last long. From the standpoint of modern war, then, Allied air raids against Japan were just beginning. If the nation allowed itself to become discouraged by such relatively minor matters, it would be impossible to be influential in the case of major matters such as effectuation of the Greater East Asia War. The public had revealed anxieties about present living conditions and the like, but an acquaintance of Tojo's, who had very recently returned from Europe, said the current situation of Japan was not bad when compared with that of Germany or Finland. In Japan, for example, it was possible to obtain vegetables in winter, but that had not been possible in Finland for several years. The level of Japanese food rations did not seem too low, either. Complaints, argued Tojo, derived from unrealistic comparisons with prewar food levels. He had never heard of an Imperial subject dying from hunger.

Tojo concluded on a positive note.



Even if the USSR denounced the existing neutrality pact in April (due, in any case, to run till 1946), there was no need to be pessimistic, Japan's cause was righteous, and there must be faith in the indestructability of the Empire. Peace in the Pacific could be attained if a close eye were kept on the European situation. Should Japan ever falter, she would be ignored afterward, and all would be lost.

The Emperor, who seemed to have been frowning with dissatisfaction during portions of the report, asked Tojo whether he thought the Soviet Union would attack Japan. Tojo replied that his most recent information was inconclusive. A source who had returned from Finland a month earlier heard at first-hand from a retired Soviet army major that the Russian people were not hostile to the Japanese, and that the Soviets were committed fully against Germany. Only if the latter collapsed would the USSR possess sufficient reserves to fight Japan but, as long as Germany

resisted, the Russians could not release forces to the Siberian front from the European theater. Nevertheless, even if Germany were defeated, the USSR would have to retain great strength in the west, because of serious difficulties with the USA and Britain. As a matter of fact, Russia was exhausted by now and would find it difficult to fight another war unless recouped. The retired Soviet major admitted openly that both the USSR and Japan would be glad to end the Second World War. But, said Tojo, another Japanese traveler who had returned home via Soviet Siberia only two weeks earlier, was of the opinion that the USSR was quite prepared to transfer vast strength from Europe if a golden opportunity presented itself to strike down Japan. Although Tojo found it difficult to choose between his sources' evaluations, he felt that, even now, Soviet Far Eastern strength and Kwantung Army strength in Manchuria were in balance. Depending upon the course of German resistance,





Marines advance under fire

the Russians could enter the Pacific war by sending reinforcements to Siberia, but Tojo called the prospects for Soviet intervention 'a toss-up'.

An official present at this Imperial audience admired Tojo's candor but was disturbed by his dogmatism – his obvious dislike of the measures taken by the cabinet which succeeded him, his condemnation of the so-called de-

cline in fighting spirit, his equation of peace with defeatism, his rosy appreciation of Japanese prospects in the war. It was the feeling of the official that aggressive Tojo had probably failed to discern the agony of the Emperor's outlook. But, for our purposes, it is important to observe that Tojo, whether his facts were right or wrong, was accurately mirroring the thoughts of the fire-eating Japanese military.



Marine rocket-firing trucks in action
on Iwo Jima



Cauldron of death

Events already belied Tojo's bravado. Fifty-five bombers from China conducted the initial B-29 raid against Yawata on 15th June 1944. The first B-29s from Saipan appeared high over Tokyo in November for daytime reconnaissance. On the 24th, in broad daylight, eighty bombers struck the Nakajima engine plant at Musashino from high altitude and then attacked other parts of the tinderbox capital and harbor. According to municipal records, 550 persons were killed or wounded, and 1,325 were rendered homeless. Kase claims that 'such was the shock of this experience . . . the government ceased to function during the raid'. But it was only a beginning. By December, enemy aircraft were attacking in formations of more than 250, though sometimes they struck singly or in pairs, taking the defenders by complete surprise. During fifteen high-altitude raids on the capital in December, it was noteworthy that the duration of the strikes was extended to an hour or two. 800 houses were

razed, 734 casualties inflicted, 3,200 persons rendered homeless. The new year was ushered in by raiders which dropped 700 incendiaries shortly after midnight on 1st January. 'Toward the direction of Ueno,' an official recorded in his diary, 'the sky was ablaze with fire. Poor helpless people rendered homeless on New Year's day!' Added this astute observer: 1945 'is the year of decision. This year will see the end of war both in Europe and Asia. Sad though it is, we must face realities squarely. We have lost the war'.

Although casualties were deceptively light at first, the scope of the air attacks increased; blind bombing began to supplant the raids against purely major military targets. During the first two months of the B-29 attacks, twenty-three of Tokyo's twenty-five wards were bombed indiscriminately. Fifteen hundred civilians became casualties in January, another 6,400 were left homeless, 1,300 houses were razed. The authorities noted that many residents were



Emperor Hirohito inspects bomb damage in Tokyo after the first B-29 raid

being wounded by fragments of anti-aircraft shells, and houses were being destroyed by crashing defense planes. Matters grew worse from February. Navy Grumman fighters and army P-51s joined the B-29 offensive, and the duration of raids now exceeded two hours. Burned-out areas increased massively, as did human losses. For the whole month of February, over 2,000 citizens were killed or injured, 82,000 lost their homes, 13,000 houses were burned down. A carrier assault on 16th February, conducted by swarms of fighters estimated to number 1,400 in total, was particularly impressive and disheartening. 'Nothing was done to interfere with the huge task forces operating at the gates of the Imperial capital,' complained an AGS officer. 'There is nothing worse to depress the fighting spirit of the people'. Known to but few at the time was the fact that, in the biggest single bomber raid to date, on snowy 25th February, spill-over from the 6,000 projectiles dropped by 130 B-29s on the

Kanda area ignited a number of buildings in the grounds of the Imperial palace; e.g., the apartments of the court ladies, the cabinet library, a guard barracks, warehouses. One Imperial official saw, hanging on a tall, snow-covered tree, an incendiary bomb sparkling with fire 'like a gruesome Christmas tree'. In the city itself, 10,000 buildings were destroyed on the 25th, over 35,000 people were homeless. For the whole month, over 2,000 citizens were killed or injured, 82,000 lost their homes, 13,000 structures were burned down.

It was clear that the Americans were in control of the skies over Tokyo. The Japanese now noted that enemy planes were able to change tactics and to come in at low altitude at night, without formation, to conduct incendiary carpet-bombing in waves. The fire raid of 10th March (Japanese 'Army Day') on Tokyo,



launched by 150 B-29s striking low and separately in a gale after midnight and dropping 190,000 incendiary bombs, burned out forty per cent of the capital in two-and-a-half hours. The city 'caught fire like a forest of pine trees'. An eyewitness reported that 'the fire clouds kept creeping higher, and the tower of the Diet building stood out black against the red sky. The city was as bright as at sunrise; clouds of smoke, soot, and sparks driven by the storm, flew over it. That night we thought the whole of Tokyo had been reduced to ashes'. Metropolitan police records indicate that 89,000 civilians were killed and another 41,000 injured. Over 276,000 houses were destroyed, over sixteen square miles were gutted, and at least 1,150,000 persons were left homeless. Twenty-five days were required to clear the ruins of the dead. Bloated and charred corpses surfaced on the Sumida river for months. Caidin calls it 'the single most devastating fire the human race has ever known'.

IGHQ admitted publicly that a fire at the bureau of Imperial mews was put out by 8 am on the 10th, but the truth was that the flames had actually approached the air raid shelter hous-

Above Left: Admiral Suzuki. Above: General Mori. Right: General Tanaka

ing the Emperor and Empress. This structure, euphemistically called the library '*Obunko*', had been completed by the end of 1942. After the major raid on Tokyo from Saipan on 24th November 1944, the sovereign had moved into *Obunko* in mid-December. In the 10th March raid, bombs directly hit the Imperial mews building and a tea house in the garden of *Obunko*. Even more dangerously, firebrands from burning central Tokyo flashed into the main palace area, ignited grass and hedges, and, fanned by demonic winds, spread to the dense, man-high shrubbery which camouflaged *Obunko* itself. Dozens of soldiers, guards, workers and firemen beat out the flames, which had been lapping at the verandah of *Obunko*, with buckets of water and with tree branches. Amid the confusion and noise, the Imperial couple sat quietly on the second floor below *Obunko*. The Emperor was awaiting reports on the Japanese military occupation of French Indo-China, on the inferno in central Tokyo, and on the imminent birth (in another air-raid shelter in





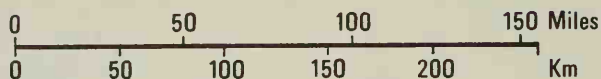
Atomic bomb raid



Major fire raids



Other fire, mine laying and bombing raids



S E A O F J A P A

KOREA

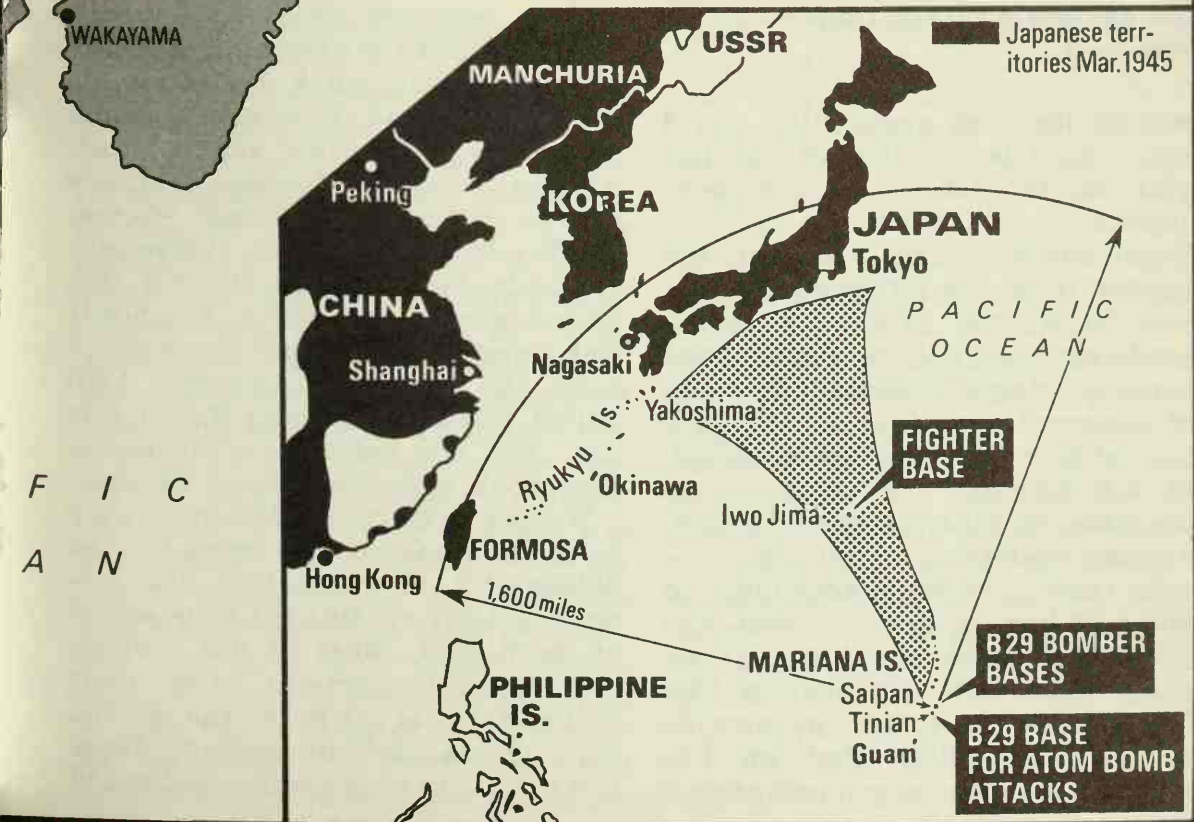
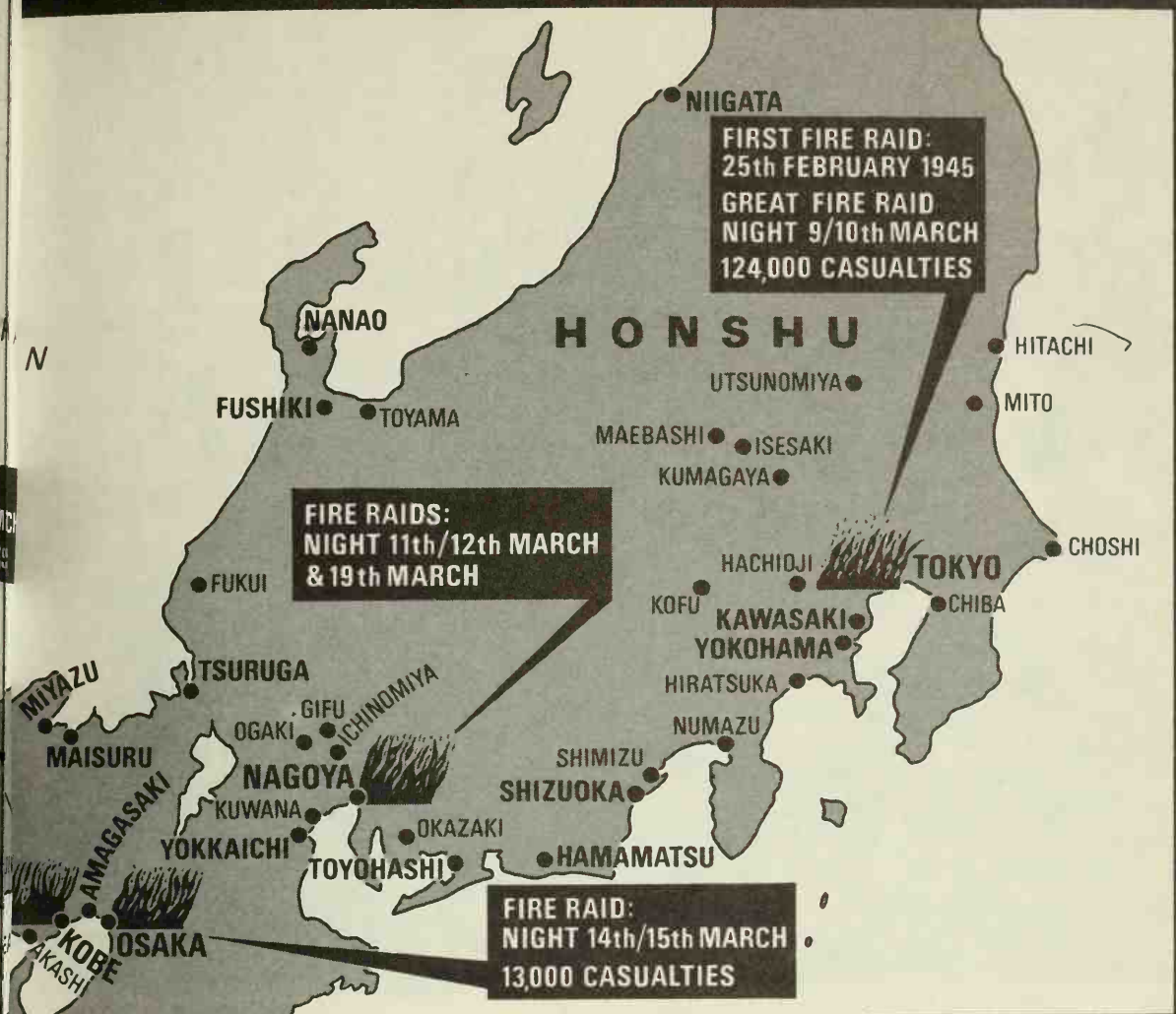
6th AUGUST
FIRST ATOMIC BOMB
DROPPED:
129,000 CASUALTIES

FIRE RAID:
NIGHT 16th/17th MARCH
15,000 CASUALTIES

9th AUGUST
SECOND ATOMIC BOMB
DROPPED:
95,000 CASUALTIES



P A C I
O C E





Bomb damage in Asaksa, Tokyo's theaterland

town) of his first grandchild. Acrid smoke could be smelled in the Imperial shelter, though there were exhausts.

When the long night was over, the Emperor took his retainers by surprise: he wanted personally to inspect burned-out Tokyo, whose plight grieved him deeply. Officials who made preliminary inspections of the city returned horrified. They were especially stricken by the sight of innumerable 'rice-plant mounds' which, on closer examination, proved to be stacks (two to three meters high) of melted bodies of humans who had tried to flee from the fires but had been roasted alive by the furnace-like gales. The retainers were also worried about the possibility that an Imperial party, if announced beforehand

and if escorted heavily as usual, would attract the attention of enemy aircraft. After much hesitation, it was decided that the monarch should make his inspection unannounced, with a small motorcade and few guards, but with air cover. Normal traffic and pedestrian movement would be entirely free. Sunday 18th March was chosen, partly because it was hoped the enemy air forces would take the day off. (Actually, 1,400 Allied planes hammered Japan this day, but the raids were conducted against air bases throughout Kyushu.)

Moving at thirty-six kilometers per hour, the Imperial motorcade left the palace at 9 am on the 18th. The Emperor quietly studied the grim scenes of desolation. Most of his subjects were taken by surprise, to see their monarch in his car flying the red and gold chrysanthemum pennon. Many bowed hastily after the procession had



passed. When the bows were in time, an aide would call them to the Emperor's attention, and the sovereign would salute graciously each time. A number of survivors, poking in the ruins, looked on, dazed and uncomprehending, as the cars went by. At the remains of a *torii* gate, the Emperor dismounted and was given briefings by officers. Where bustling factories, houses, and shops had stood, there were now gutted buildings, contorted trees, tangled frames of trucks and bicycles, scorched girders, rubble. One old lady caught the Emperor's attention: oblivious to everything she was washing clothing in the water pouring from a broken main. The monarch next viewed the scene from a bridge, and then went to a police station where he was told about the situation in that ward: 12,884 of 12,934 houses had been destroyed; 10,500 people had been killed or injured. In the car on the

way back to the palace, the Emperor said sadly to a chamberlain that at the time of the great Kanto earthquake of 1923, he had inspected the entire city on horseback. Everything had been burned down; nothing was left. But perhaps because there were no tall buildings then, the Emperor had not derived such feelings of agony. This time, a far more merciless impression was conveyed. Wreckage of concrete remained now; it pained the monarch's heart even more. 'It is truly tragic . . . Tokyo has finally become scorched earth, has it not?' At 11.00am the motorcade returned from its somber and highly unusual inspection. The Emperor had truly risked his life, for at 1.42pm an enemy plane raided Asakusa, not far from where the party had driven; seven civilians were killed or wounded.

The fact of the Imperial inspection of 18th March 1945 possesses special significance. Japanese officers were well acquainted with the saying that even victorious commanders should not go to the battlefield. Many drew the conclusion from their humane Emperor's inspection, that a rapid ending of the war could be expected. The main fear was that 'ending of the war' could be equated with 'defeat'.

The obliteration of the city of Tokyo was completed by saturation raids in April and May. In the early hours of 14th April, 160 B-29s dropped 754 tons of incendiaries, left 641,000 civilians homeless and 11.4 square miles burned out. The sacred Meiji shrine was razed, and 36 instances of damage were caused by flames invading the Imperial compounds, although the main palace was still intact. Some Japanese writers professed to see in the inferno of 14th April, 'revenge' for the death of President Roosevelt two days earlier. 'Paper bombs', leaflets dropped by enemy planes, warned that the Japanese militarists, from magnificent air-raid shelters, had brought the people to the verge of doom: '... You have no way of escaping the bombs. You have no place to hide.



Continued resistance means only a horrible death. Demand an end to such hopeless resistance. It is the only way to save your homeland'. Japanese military police were on the alert to try to prevent the populace from reading the leaflets.

By May, forces numbering 400 American planes went after major target complexes. A number of Japanese expected a great saturation raid against Tokyo on Navy Day, 27th May, a precedent set by the huge attack on Army Day in March. The B-29s came early. About 250 bombers thundered over the defenseless capital near 1.30am on 24th/25th May and loosed 119,000 bombs (3,646 tons) in two hours. Six incendiaries razed a two-story arbor near the Imperial *Obunko* shelter, and other damage was done to the compound, but the palace still stood. After noon, thirty fighters attacked the capital again for a half-hour. When night came on the 25th, the Imperial chamberlains hoped the weary sovereign could retire early

Above: Refugees begin the exodus after Tokyo's first raid. Right: The remnants of shattered city services

but, around 10.00pm, over 200 B-29s returned to complete the destruction of Tokyo. On a fine night with a strong southerly wind and a humidity of fifty per cent, the bombers rained down 149,000 bombs (3,252 tons) on the surviving center of Tokyo. They hit the Yasukuni shrine to the war dead, the central markets, Tokyo station, the old American embassy, the foreign minister's official residence, the Imperial Hotel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, which had survived the 1923 earthquake, the war ministry, the navy ministry, the army general staff headquarters, the war minister's official residence, the transportation ministry, the Kabuki theater, the ministry of Greater East Asia, Keio University, the Yomiuri Press, etc. Errant incendiary bombs directly struck Hanzo gate, west of the palace, and destroyed the entranceway and the



two guard boxes. Nearby, other incendiaries hit the structure housing Japan's holy of holies, the mythological Three Sacred Treasures, which had only been moved to strong underground vaults the preceding November. Pump trucks poured water onto the structure for two hours; when water ran out, firefighters scaled the roof, pulled off incendiaries and threw them to the ground, where the bombs were stamped out. The treasure building was saved.

The wind fanned Tokyo's fires, the fires fanned the wind, and thermal cyclones hurled blazing ashes, bullets of fire, in jets across the broad Imperial moats. Fireballs caught on ancient pines and palms, and on the eaves and gutters of the main palace. Firefighters finally beat out the flames. At 1.00am on the 26th, the all-clear sounded, and the Imperial couple came up to ground level from the basement shelter in *Obunko*. Five minutes later, flames exploded from





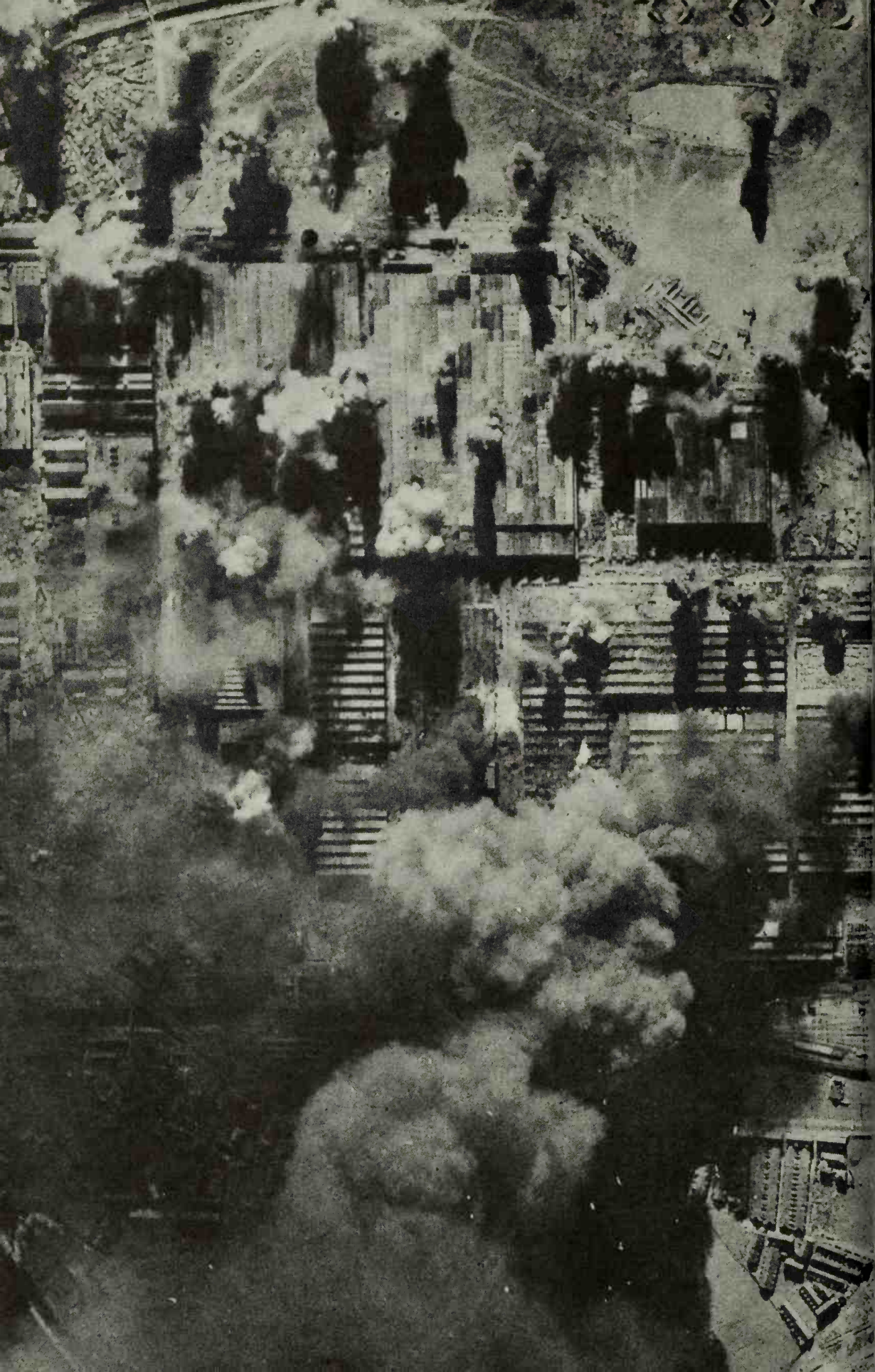
the lattice work above the ceiling of the main palace. Witnesses likened the fiery blast to that of a flame-thrower. Frenzied efforts were made to play hoses on the fire, but the angle was poor and the water pressure was feeble. Flames spread like lightning through the glass-paned, wooden hallways.

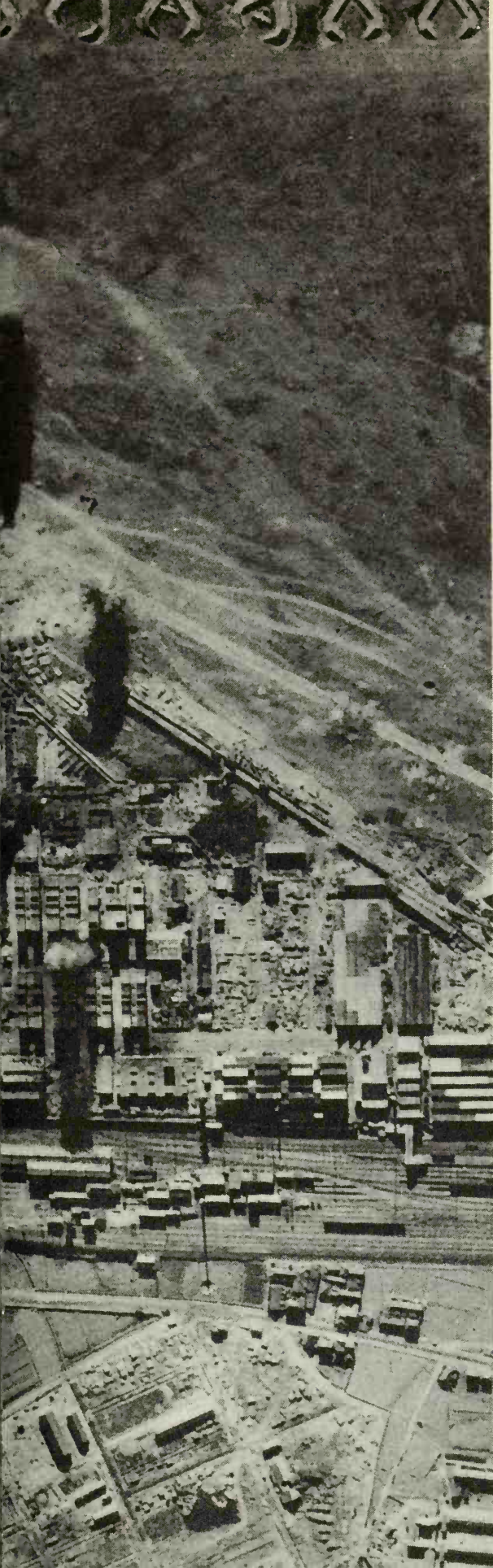
General Mori (Imperial Guard Division commander) and General Tanaka (Eastern Army District commander) raced over to direct the efforts to save the Imperial palace and environs. But the cypress wood burned fiercely, and the molten copper roof slates gave off a strange and poisonous green flame. A change in wind drove the fires from the front palace to the rear palace, where Their Majesties used to reside before moving to *Obunko*. It was imperative to destroy three hallways linking the palaces, in order to create firebreaks, but even the Imperial Guards commander could not undertake such a thing at the sacred palace on his own authority. When permission was obtained from the Imperial ADC, army engineers set demolition charges, but these failed to do the job. Thereupon the soldiers attacked the pillars and beams with mallets and crowbars. Meanwhile, orders had been issued for the troops to save all possible items from the rear palace. Working with a frenzy, the men hauled out twenty truckloads of straw mats, gilt doors, books, paintings, clothing, furniture, the crown prince's toys. To save the goods, water hoses were concentrated on the shell of the palace, until it collapsed gently, as in a scene from a slow-motion movie. In four hours, by 5.00am on the 26th, 18,239 square meters of 20,856 in the palace compound had been razed. Only a reception chamber survived from twenty-seven buildings in front and rear. There had been something like a religious faith, held even among

those at the top of the government, that the Imperial palace was immune from the foe; few had believed that its survival until 25th May was attributable to sheer luck. The actuality was an immense shock, 'like the fall of a castle in days of old'. At the height of the fires, Premier Suzuki (who had barely escaped incineration with his family when his own official residence was burned down this day) went to the roof of his shelter and worshipped the blazing palace from afar, while, gasping from smoke, he wiped away tears of sorrow. Thirty-four bodies were found, mainly in the inner gardens of the front palace, where a dozen soldiers were cremated alive in the supposed safety of an air-raid shelter.

The Emperor was saddened by news of the loss of the palace and of the destruction of residence after residence belonging to all of the royal princes. According to Kase, however, the monarch stated that he felt better since the palace bombing as he could now share the people's hardships. A sleepless Emperor thanked his retainers and officers for their strenuous efforts and sacrifices. On the morning of the 27th, he and the Empress started to tour the burned-out palace compound, but an air-raid alert sounded and they could not leave *Obunko* again till afternoon. Guided by Imperial retainers, they threaded their way through charred timber, slates, and rocks, toward the site of their old palace. At one point a senior aide apologized for the tragedy, but the Emperor replied that it was unavoidable in wartime, and in turn expressed his own sorrow for the regrettable loss of so many lives. An aide never forgot the sight of the Empress, clad in wartime trousers, poking among the slates and debris with a stick; she gave him a little clay figurine, which she had found, as a memento when the inspection was over. Meanwhile, the Emperor was wondering about the fate of a favorite bronze statue of Frederick the Great which used to stand in the garden of

American air attack with parachute bombs on a Japanese motor convoy





his study. Later the bronze was found broken in two.

General Tanaka sought to resign by way of apology, but the war minister declined to accept the action. The Imperial Household air defense chief did resign, as did the distinguished minister of the household and his deputy. General Umezu, chief of the AGS, stated he would take responsibility for the disaster, but the war minister, General Anami, insisted that he was ultimately responsible for defense of the capital, and he could not be dissuaded by either the prime minister or the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. Anami's resignation would have brought down the cabinet at this critical juncture; therefore the Emperor interceded to reassure the war minister.

The latest raids on Tokyo at the end of May had razed another twenty-two square miles, burned out 90,000 houses, and caused 'the most violent fires ever experienced in Japan'. 'As I ran toward the distant Tama river,' recalls a survivor of the hell of 25th May, 'I kept my eyes on the sky. It was like a fireworks display as the incendiaries exploded. Blazing petroleum jelly, firebrands and sparks flew everywhere. People were aflame, rolling and writhing in agony, screaming piteously for help, but beyond all mortal assistance . . . I still remember a bamboo grove on fire, the bamboo knuckles exploding with frightening shots . . . I saw roofs flying in air and a huge flaming telephone pole being spun by a tornado . . . It was the longest night of my life'. The capital was no longer worth another B-29 assault in 1945.

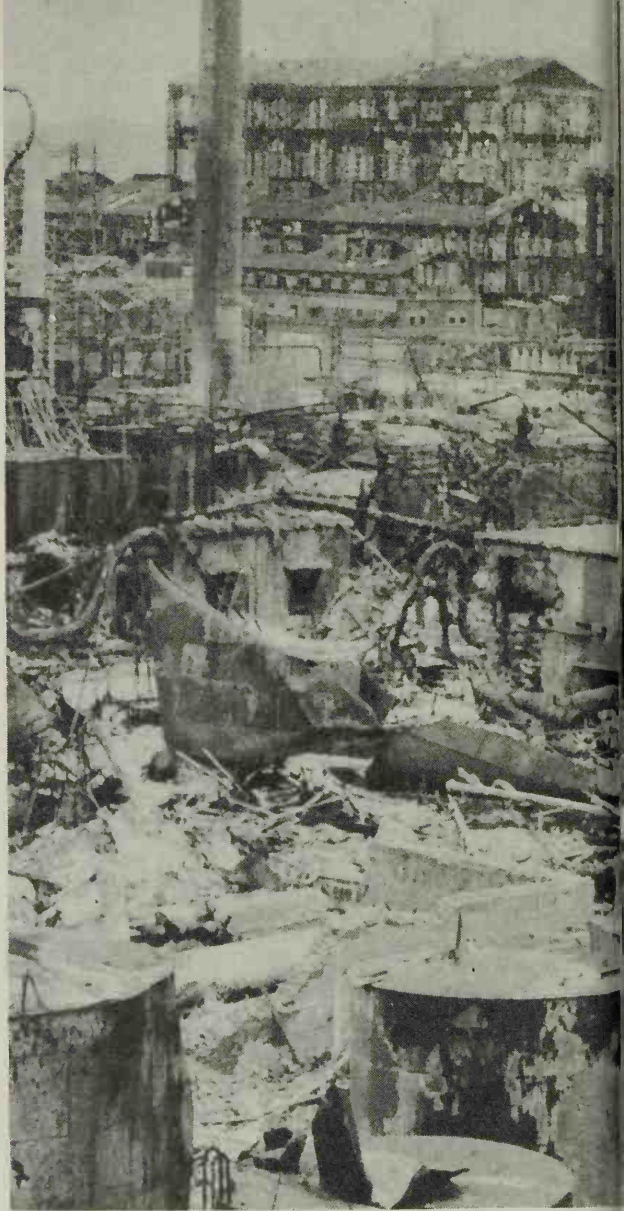
During the first five months of the year, all of Japan was struck by 16,958 enemy planes, according to AGS estimates. Casualties had mounted to 214,261. American records indicate that 153,887 tons of bombs (including 98,466 incendiary) were dropped on the

Bomb attack on the Kawasaki aircraft factory north of Tokyo, January 1945

whole of Japan by US Army planes in 1945. A contemporary home ministry report evaluated the behavior of the populace in the May catastrophe: 'The consequences of the air raid [of 10th March] had caused the people to evacuate from the area, and in certain sections they had neglected to keep the water tanks filled, lacked the preparation for air defense, and also from the beginning the people devoted themselves to carrying out their household goods and lacked a fighting spirit toward the incendiary bombing . . . so that they were not able to defend themselves against the aerial attack.'

After the May raids, the minister of home affairs admitted that civilian defense measures in Tokyo and elsewhere were considered to be futile. The police section chief at air defense headquarters said that the public began to realize that equipment and general preparations against raids were useless. Enlightened citizens often gave up attempting to cope with the situation. After a few heavy raids, the ignorant also lost hope. During the later attacks there was a general exodus from afflicted areas.

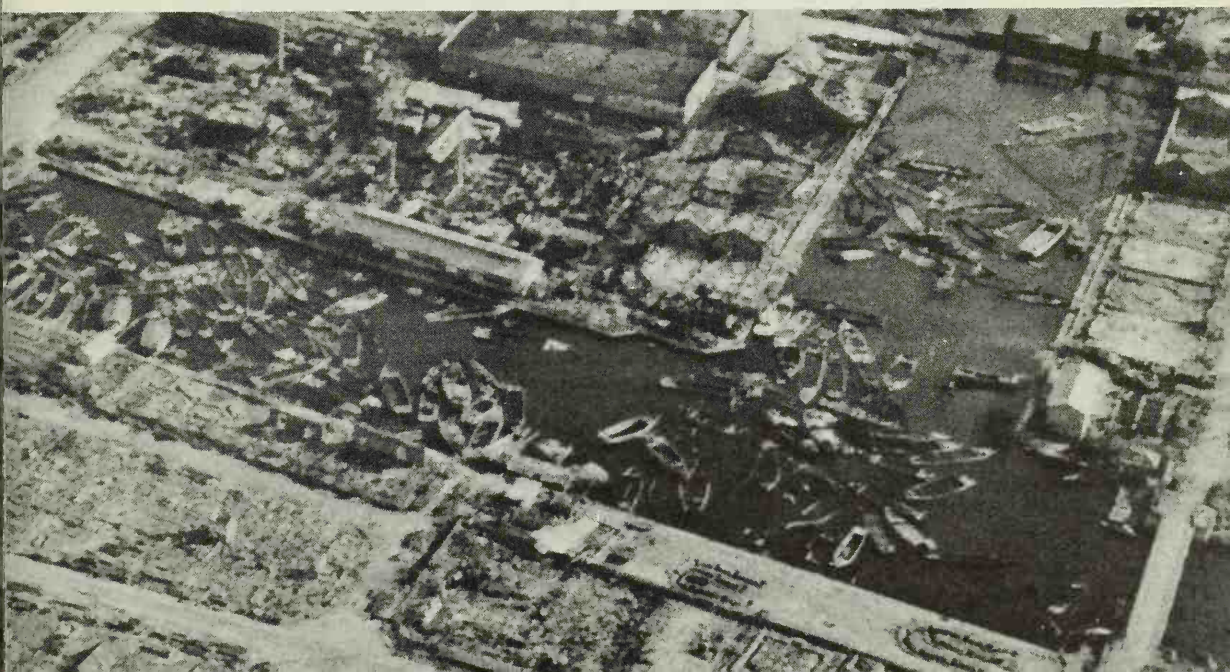
Community interest varied with respect to the protection of public buildings. The overall tendency was to look after one's own property and not to worry excessively about one's neighbor. Local neighborhood groups may have been willing to help each other and the schools but they were reluctant to leave their own sections to fight fires in public buildings and hotels or even temples and shrines. In the case of the larger office buildings and hotels, antagonism supplanted indifference. To this societal phenomenon, one might add the problems of harbor fire fighting. Until the end of 1944 the great port of Yokohama possessed only one antiquated and puny fireboat; the authorities had to depend upon auxiliary boats owned by private companies in the dock area. But when the fire raids occurred, the private firms refused to respond because they were preoccupied with



Extensive bomb damage to strategic targets. Above: the oil refinery at Otake. Right: the waterfront at Osaka

protecting their own properties. Since this condition typified the entire harbor-defense system, it became the practice to drag burning ships to an unused portion of the harbor, so that their eventual sinking would not block water traffic. Ashore, fire-fighters abandoned blazing buildings, to protect those surrounding, although somewhat more effort was made when a flaming ship was tied to a pier.

Air-raid shelters were without exception inadequate, due in part to the shortage of building materials, especi-



ally of reinforcing steel and cement. Large exterior facilities were built of wood and earth, and lacked lighting, sanitary facilities, and seating. In many cases, the structures were so weak that they constituted suffocating death traps for those who sought refuge in them. None of these public shelters was gas or fire proof. The home ministry forbade use of the Tokyo subway stations as shelters because water seepage and the sandy soil prevented construction to a depth sufficient to afford ample protection against high-explosive bombs. The value of tunnel-type public shelters was often offset by the distances which the populace had to traverse to reach them. In all, less than two per cent of the population had access to shelters which might shield them against bombs weighing up to 500 lbs.

It has been estimated that the average tonnage of incendiaries dropped during the saturation raids amounted to 225 tons per square mile, or 700 pounds per acre. In the three urban complexes which constituted the keystones of Japan's war economy, the following percentages were burned out in the air raids: Tokyo-Yokohama-Kawasaki, fifty-six per cent; Nagoya, fifty-two per cent; Osaka-Kobe, fifty-seven per cent. Sixty-five of the leading cities were devastated, Kyoto being the only major center spared. The medium-sized cities were obliged to yield their fire-fighting and air-defense equipment to the largest cities, and were thus themselves helpless against incendiary attacks. The Japanese navy is known to have stripped the larger cities of new hose; hundreds of remaining sections had as many as 300 patches each. Probably the hose in service would have burst at high pressures, but working pressures seldom exceeded 80 lbs per square inch, and generally ranged between zero and 60 lbs.

By June 1945, the fire-bomb offensive against the largest urban complexes had been extended to small and medium-sized cities which contained

important basic materials and sub-contracting installations. Bombers razed seventy-two per cent of the area and displaced eighty per cent of the population of Hamamatsu, a major producer of airplane propellers and a vital railhead on the main network of Honshu island. About sixty-two per cent destruction was visited upon Okayama city, an important source of explosives, metals, and plastics. In view of the extensive decentralization of Japanese industry, the gross damage percentages reflect a fairly accurate index of the total physical damage to industrial floorage.

Variations in the planned conduct of the populace were many. In Kobe city, for example, workers dropped their tools as soon as an air raid alert sounded, so that they would have enough time to flee to the hillsides immediately behind the metropolis before the bombers could arrive. Consequently, the mere sounding of the alert signal in the Kobe region caused an immediate drop in industrial production. According to information reaching the war ministry around May 1945, the attendance rate at munitions factories, throughout the country, promptly after a raid dwindled to between twenty and thirty per cent. The average rate of absenteeism at factories in devastated areas approximated forty per cent. In unraided zones, the absentee rate averaged fifteen per cent, but even in unbombed Kyoto lost man-hours totaled forty per cent by July 1945.

Labor conscription measures further increased the absenteeism, as growing numbers of students, women, Koreans and Chinese, prisoners of war, and penitentiary inmates had to be placed in the labor force. By 1945, according to munitions ministry annals, 3,363,000 women belonged to the labor pool. This meant that about thirty-six per cent of the entire work force consisted of women, of whom approximately sixty per cent were engaged in agriculture. Of the female

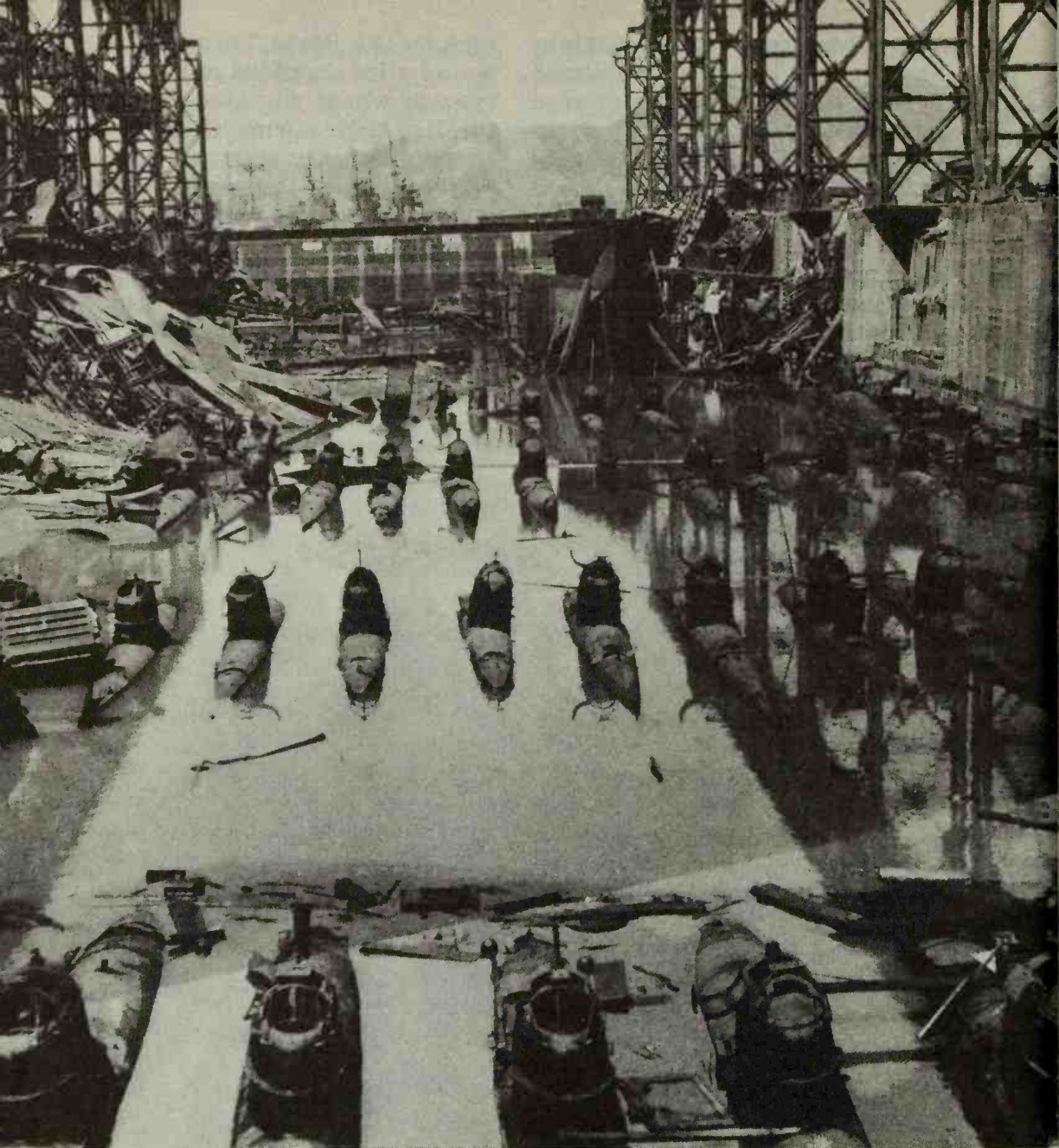
age group fifteen to forty-five nationwide, 21.4 per cent had been mobilized for labor. Two million students were laboring by mid-year, including farm and forestry work. Another 323,000 Koreans and 34,000 Chinese had been brought into Japan as war workers.

An indirect side-effect of the raids was the dispersal of the labor force because of housing problems, thereby affecting both control and efficiency. Professor Shioda, an economist at Tokyo Municipal University, tells us something of the Japanese worker's outlook: 'The "Association for Ser-

vice to the State Through Industry"' would allot an added pittance of sake, rice, or wheat to "labor heroes" who fulfilled their norms. Other than that, there were only spiritual lectures, of no help to an empty stomach. Exhausted workers, whose lives were being ravaged by the national personal service draft law and by the wage control ordinance, and whose health was being undermined by long hours of labor and by insufficient nutrition, could not enhance their

The remains of a factory in Tokyo





Two-man submarines lie half-submerged after an attack on the dry-dock at Kure

working zeal, no matter how hard they were driven. On the contrary, their production capability decreased as the war intensified. Nothing new in the theoretical or political sense was engendered by the retrogressive spiritual movement, such as worshipping the palace, reciting the Imperial rescript on education, or taking icy baths'. To cite the comments of an iron industry worker: 'The factories

were permeated with the one drab color of war. Workers were assigned twelve hours' labor per day, plus overtime and "after-overtime" in addition. There was insufficient time off during a month. If we did take a day off, company investigators would go to our house. Some of us who had to take side-jobs in order to eke out the low wages, were arrested and jailed.'

According to home ministry data, at a minimum the following civilian losses were incurred as the result of all air raids on the homeland: 241,309

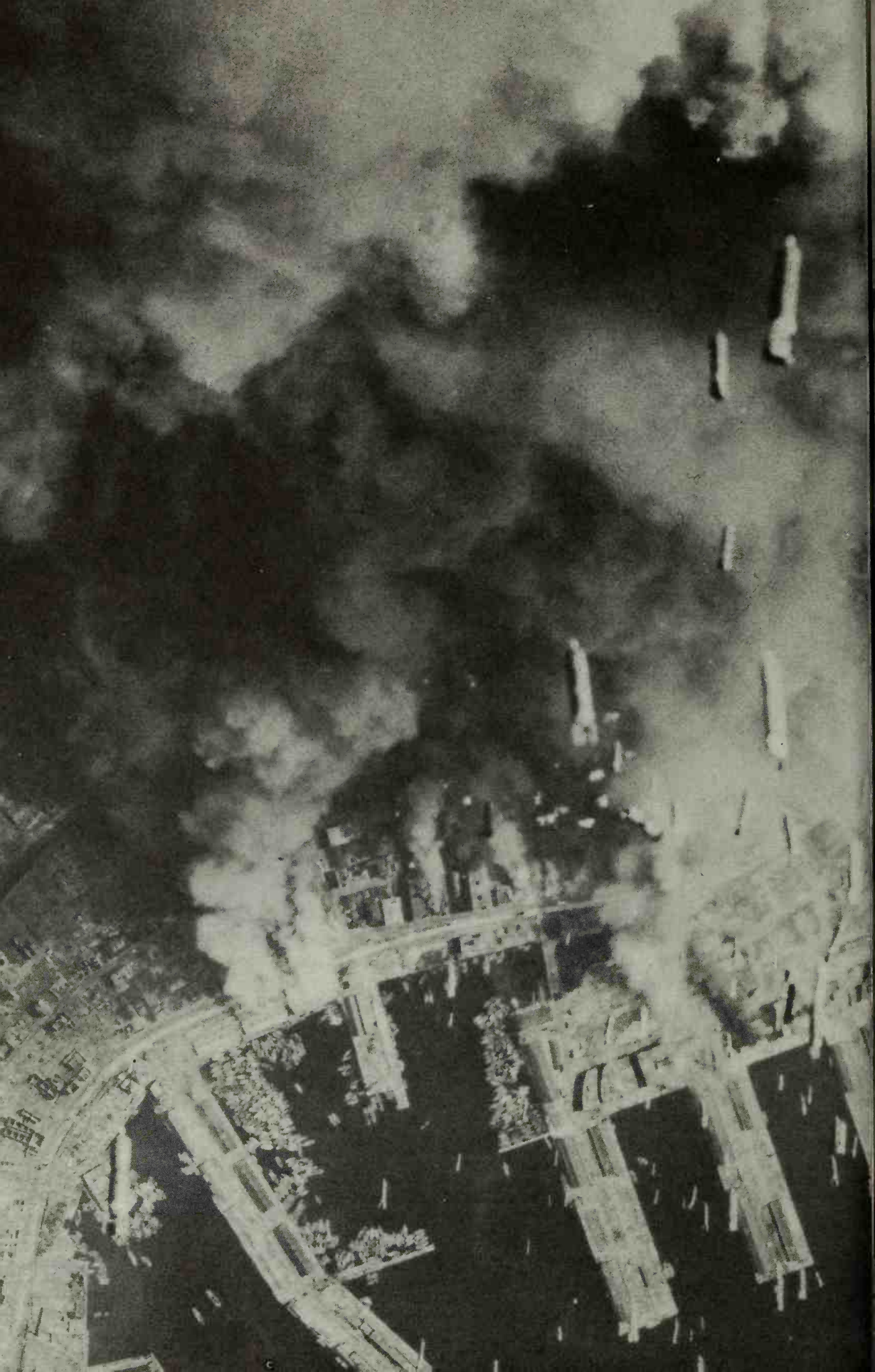
killed, 313,041 injured, 8,045,094 homeless, 2,333,388 buildings destroyed, 110,928 partially destroyed. The number of houses razed represented at least thirty per cent of the national total. It should also be noted that the Japanese themselves demolished 615,000 buildings as firebreaks, 214,000 of which were located in Tokyo. In all, about 13,000,000 people were driven from their homes by the destruction of dwelling units; a substantial number, in addition, were rendered homeless by the bombing of factory dormitories.

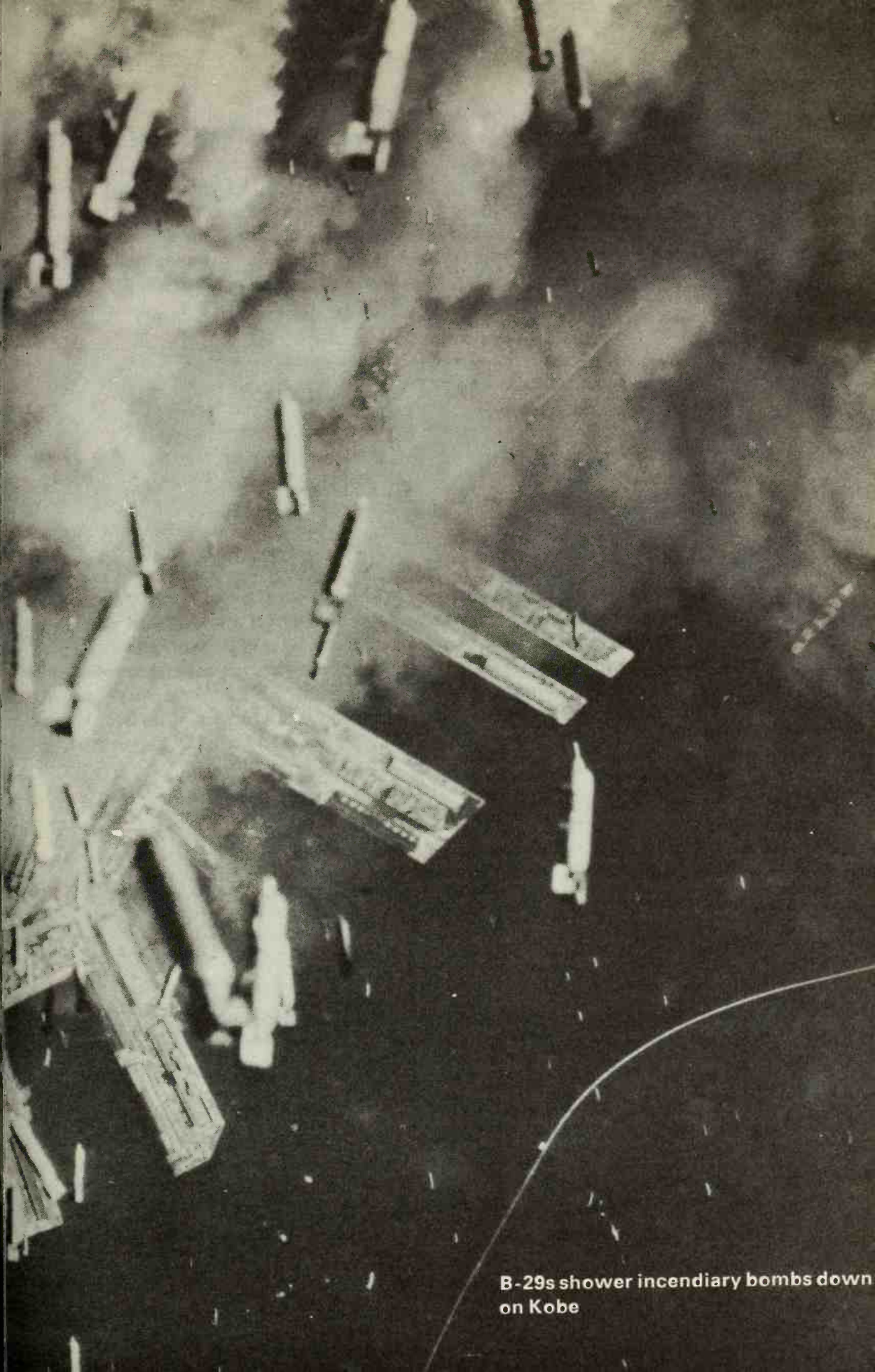
Major evacuation of Japanese civilians from urban areas began in 1944. Between January and September of that year, 1,000,000 people were moved out of Tokyo. The capital's population fell from 5,000,000 in January 1945 to 2,453,000 in June. About fifty-five per cent of the Nagoya area inhabitants were evacuated; sixty per cent of the Osaka-Kobe complex. Probably 8,295,000 persons in all categories were evacuated throughout Japan. Dispersal of the urban school population, begun slowly in mid-1944, was intensified after the raids of March 1945. By April, over eighty-seven per cent of urban school children had been moved to places away from target areas.

Naturally, there was little time for recording of impressions by the distraught survivors of air raids, but the famous wartime correspondence of the young student Ichiro Hatano remains. In late June 1945, at Suwa, he wrote: 'These air-raid warnings every night are very tiring. The planes don't always come, but I am absolutely fed up with the continual buzzing on the wireless. As it is quite impossible to write in the evening these days, I have not opened this book for a long time'. What compelled Hatano to write this time was his astonishment at his father's detached attitude during the most recent night-time alert: 'So you think, Ichiro,' said the father, 'that it's better to get as much sleep as one can - four or five hours - before dying?

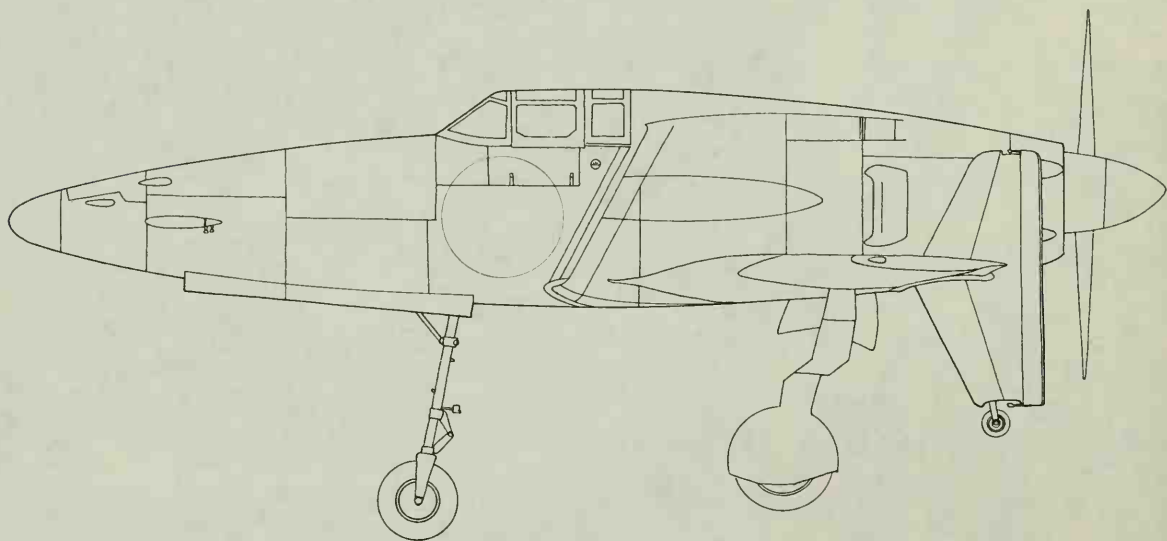
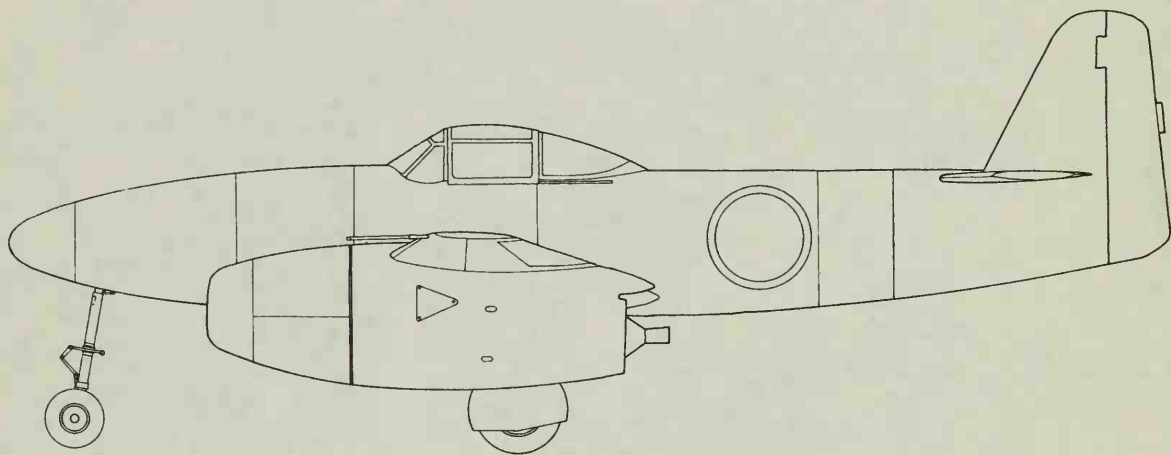
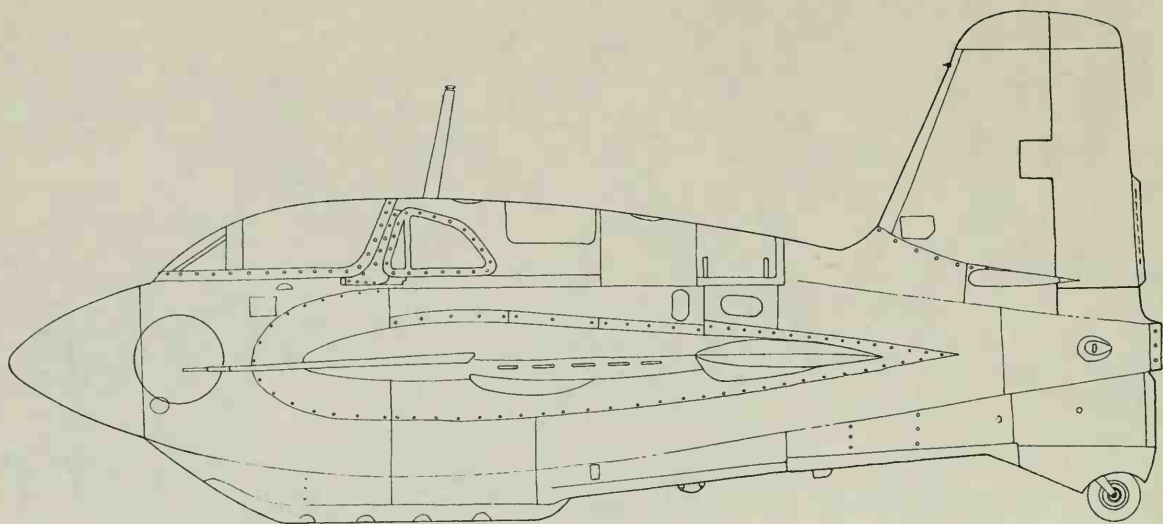
I don't agree. We don't know when we shall be killed, and for that reason I should like to read all I can, at least, while I am alive. Look, I have here three books I want to read before I die. Do you really think I have time to let myself go to sleep?' Upon saying this, the old man 'gently drew his hand over the book and began reading again'. All survivors comment upon the gnawing, neurotic pressures, ranging from irritability to exhaustion to lassitude, induced by incessant air raid alerts and alarms since 1944.

The saturation attacks of the spring of 1945 caused such an exodus that the authorities allowed only children, the non-essential, the sick and the aged to leave evacuation zones. This policy had been made necessary because personnel essential to air defense and production had been getting out under the guise of air-raid sufferers or official evacuees, and because people in small towns had caught the evacuation scare from the cities and were fleeing to supposed safety. The government was obliged to emphasize that key personnel, including officials, medical staff, munitions workers, and transportation employees, must remain at their posts with 'renewed indignation'. The totalitarian-type Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) put up scolding posters which said, 'Do not mistake evacuation for flight'. Nevertheless, the populace which had experienced or heard of the ghastly fire raids streamed interminably into the countryside with their carts and trailers, drawn by old folk or by women. Not only were furniture and bedding loaded aboard, but one often saw even floor matting (*tatami*). After the incendiary raid on Tokyo in late February 1945, survivors could be observed dragging wagons through the rutted snow, their faces and hands caked with ash and soot and blood, their feet encased in thin socks instead of shoes or clogs. As the Emperor himself had said in March 'Tokyo has finally become scorched earth'.





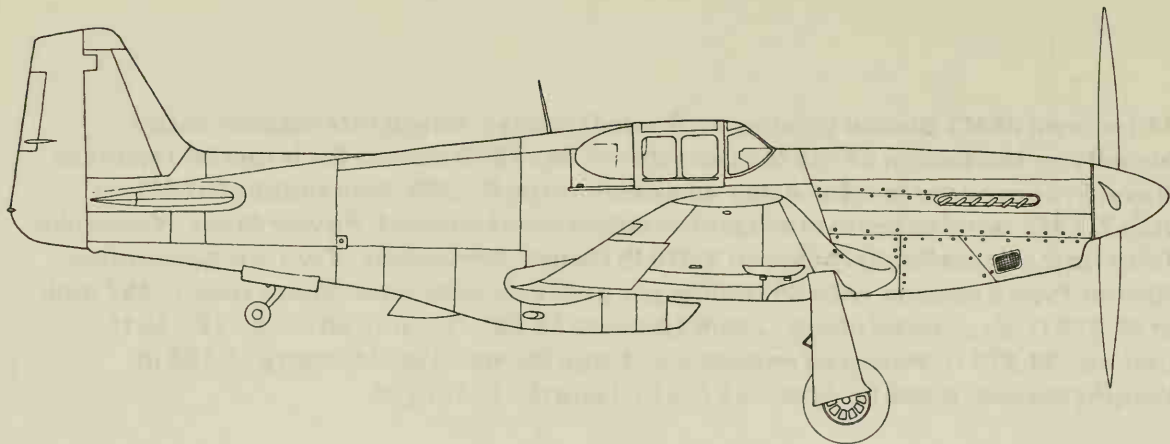
**B-29s shower incendiary bombs down
on Kobe**



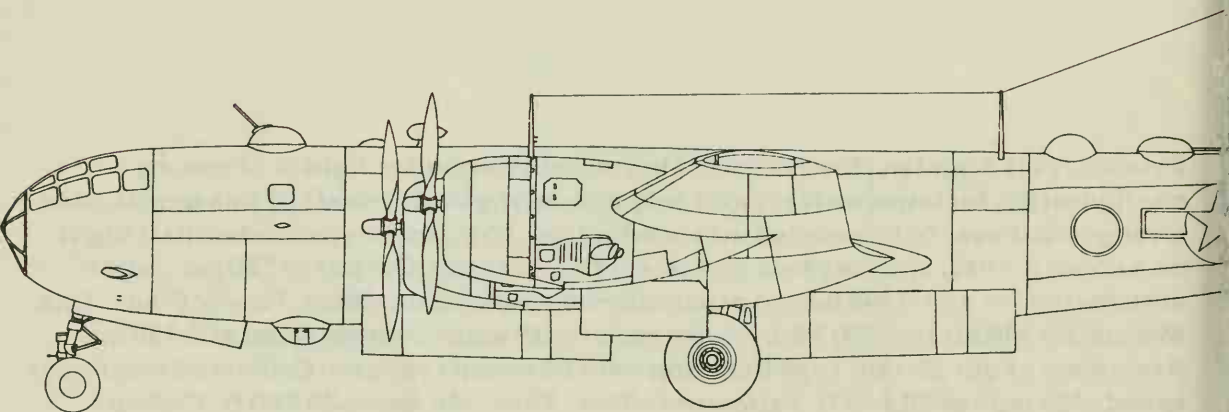
Mitsubishi J8M1 Shusui (Swinging Sword) rocket-driven interceptor based broadly on the design of the Messerschmitt Me 163B Komet for Imperial Japanese Navy. Proposed variant for Army was designated Ki-200. Sole flight of J8M1 on July 7, 1945 terminated in crash and destruction of aircraft. *Power Plant* : Yokosuka Toko Ro.2 bi-fuel liquid rocket of 3,310 lb thrust. *Armament* : Two wing-mounted 30-mm Type 5 cannon with 60 rounds per gun. *Estimated maximum speed* : 497 mph at 39,370 ft. *Estimated climb* : 2 min 10 sec to 19,685 ft, 3 min 30 sec to 32,810 ft. *Ceiling* : 39,370 ft. *Powered endurance* : 5 min 30 sec. *Weight empty* : 3,186 lb. *Weight loaded* : 8,598 lb. *Span* : 31 ft 2 in. *Length* : 19 ft 2½ in.

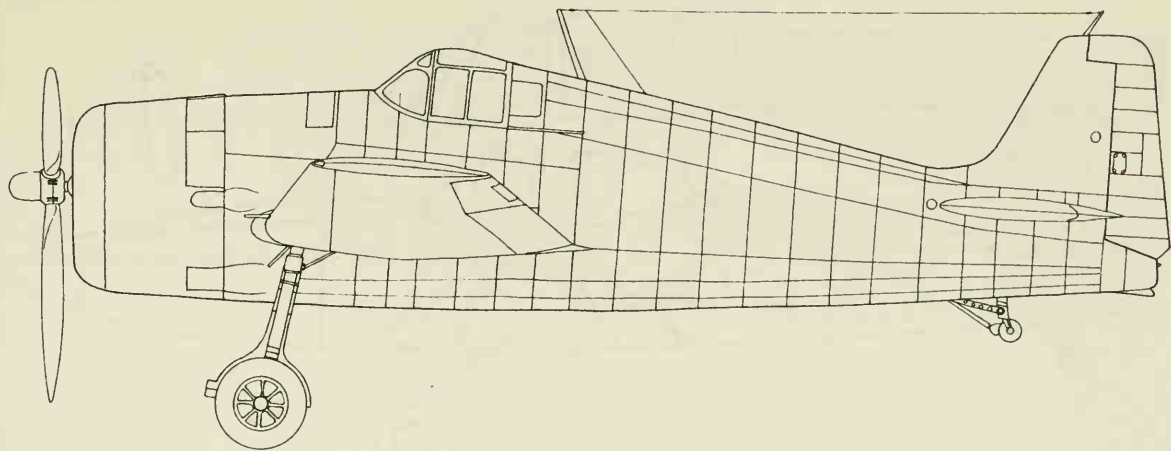
Nakajima Ki-201 Karyu (Fire Dragon) twin-jet attack fighter for Army based on design of Messerschmitt Me 262 but somewhat larger. The prototype was scheduled to fly in December 1945 but no production order had been placed. *Power Plant* : Two Ne-230 turbojets each of 1,950 lb thrust or two Ne-130 turbojets each of 2,000 lb thrust. *Armament* : Two 20-mm and two 30-mm cannon. *Estimated maximum speed* : 530 mph at 32,800 ft. *Estimated climb* : 13 min 15 sec to 32,800 ft. *Span* : 44 ft 11½ in. *Length* : 37 ft 8¾ in

Kyushu J7W1 Shinden (Magnificent Lightning) interceptor fighter of canard configuration for Imperial Navy and only piston-engined aircraft of this unorthodox arrangement ever to be ordered into production. First prototype made initial flight on August 3, 1945, and only two additional flights made. Output of 150 per month anticipated for mid-1946 but no production examples completed. *Power Plant* : One Mitsubishi MK9D (Ha-43) 18-cylinder radial with supercharger rated at 2,130 hp. *Armament* : Four 30-mm Type 5 cannon with 60 rounds per gun. *Estimated maximum speed* : 466 mph at 28,540 ft. *Estimated climb* : 10 min 40 sec to 26,250 ft. *Ceiling* : 39,000 ft. *Range* : 528 miles. *Weight empty* : 7,639 lb. *Weight loaded* : 10,913 lb. *Span* : 36 ft. 5½ in. *Length* : 30 ft. 4½ in.

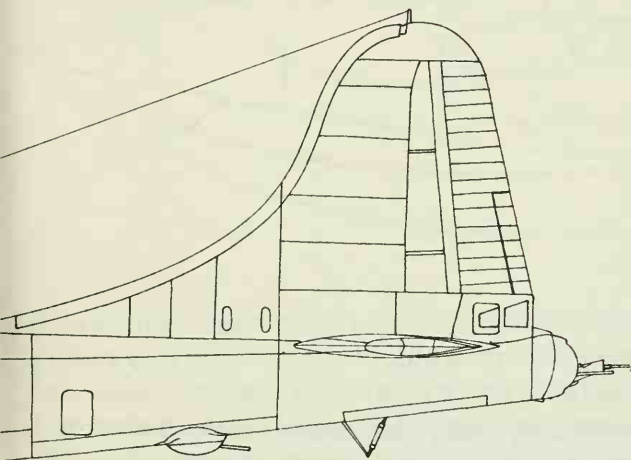


North American P-51C Mustang interceptor, long-range escort fighter and fighter-bomber was the initial Merlin-engined version of the Mustang built at Dallas, Texas, the identical model built simultaneously at Inglewood, California, being the P-51B. Total of 1,988 P-51Bs built at Inglewood and 1,750 P-51Cs at Dallas before both plants switched to manufacture of the P-51D. These models of the Mustang appeared in the Pacific Theatre during the first half of 1944. Following applies to P-51C-1. *Power Plant* : One Packard V-1650-3 Merlin of 1,620 hp. *Armament* : Four 0.5-in Browning MG 53-2 guns with 350 (inboard pair) and 280 (outboard pair) rounds per gun. *Maximum speed* : 440 mph at 30,000 ft. *Climb* : 3.6 min to 10,000 ft, 7 min to 20,000 ft. *Ceiling* : 42,000 ft. *Range* : 550 miles normal, 2,200 miles max. *Weight empty* : 6,840 lb. *Weight loaded* : 9,200 lb normal, 11,200 lb maximum. *Span* : 37 ft 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. *Length* : 32 ft 3 in

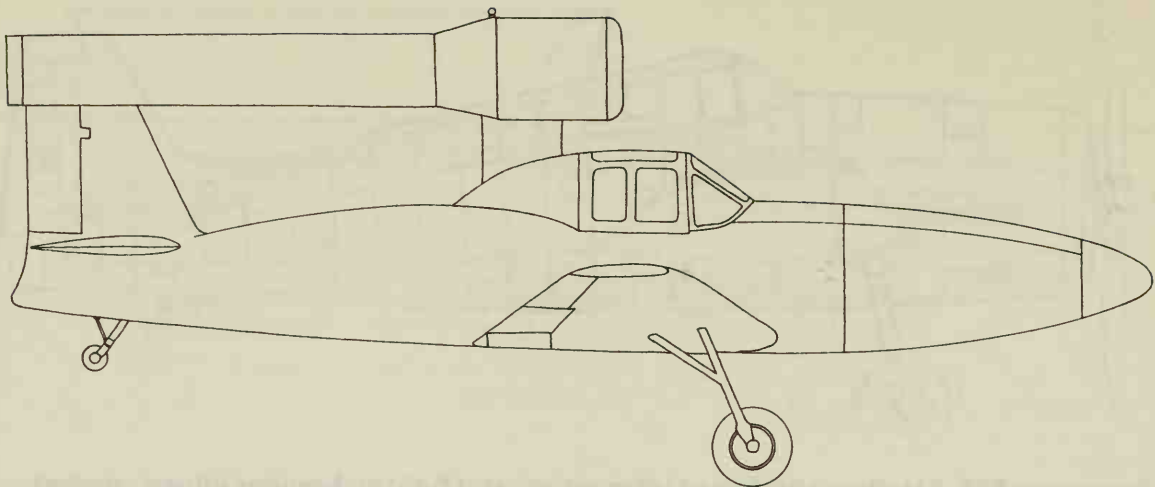




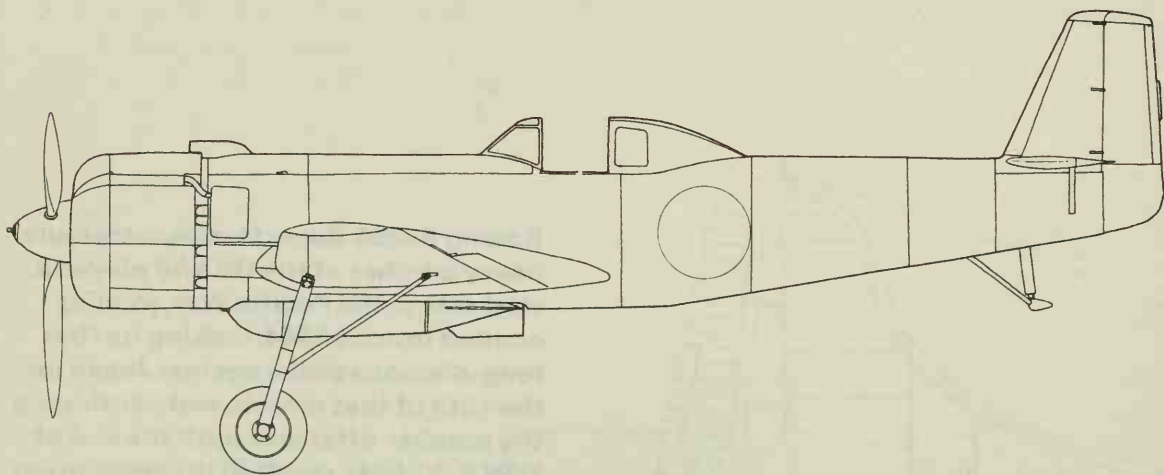
Grumman F6F-3 Hellcat shipboard interceptor and fighter-bomber joined combat in the Pacific mid-1943 and soon became mainstay of the US Navy's carrier-based fighter force, being joined during final phases of war by the improved F6F-5 model. Total of 4,423 F6F-3 Hellcats was built before production switched to the F6F-5 in April 1944, and the two models of this Grumman fighter were credited with the destruction of 5,156 enemy aircraft. *Power Plant* : One Pratt & Whitney R-2800-10 18-cylinder radial of 2,000 hp. *Armament* : Six 0.5-in machine guns with 400 rounds per gun. *Maximum speed* : 376 mph at 17,300 ft. *Climb* : 3,500 ft/min initial. *Ceiling* : 38,400 ft. *Range* : 1,090 miles normal, 1,590 miles maximum. *Weight empty* : 9,042 lb. *Weight loaded* : 11,381 lb normal. *Span* : 42 ft 10 in. *Length* : 33 ft 7 in



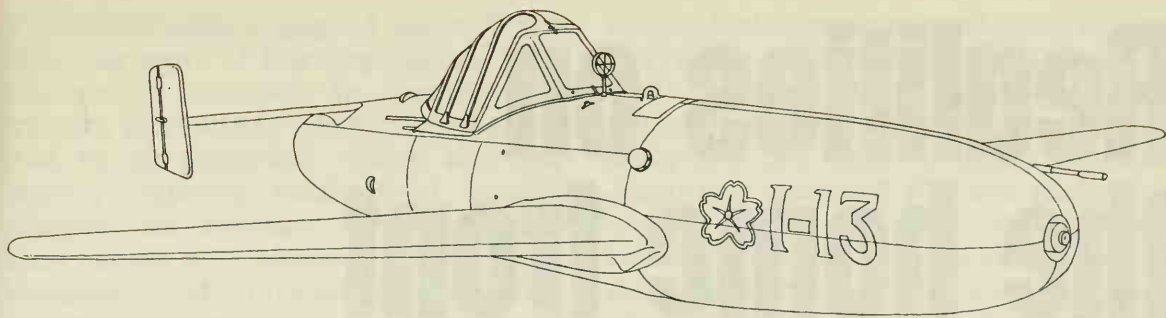
Boeing B-29A Superfortress strategic heavy bomber of the USAAF played a vital role in the Pacific War, joining combat in June 1944, making its first long-distance strike against Japan on the 15th of that month, and continuing the bomber offensive until the end of WW II. V-J day resulted in cancellation of orders for 5,092 B-29s, and the last of the 3,974 built was not delivered until June 10, 1946. *Power Plant* : Four Wright R-3350-23 twin-row radials of 2,200 hp each. *Armament* : 16,000 lb of bombs and 10-12 0.5-in machine guns for defence. *Maximum speed* : 365 mph at 25,000 ft. *Cruising speed* : 220 mph. *Ceiling* : 31,850 ft. *Range* : 5,830 miles. *Weight empty* : 69,610 lb. *Weight loaded* : 105,000 lb. *Span* : 141 ft 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. *Length* : 99 ft 0 in.



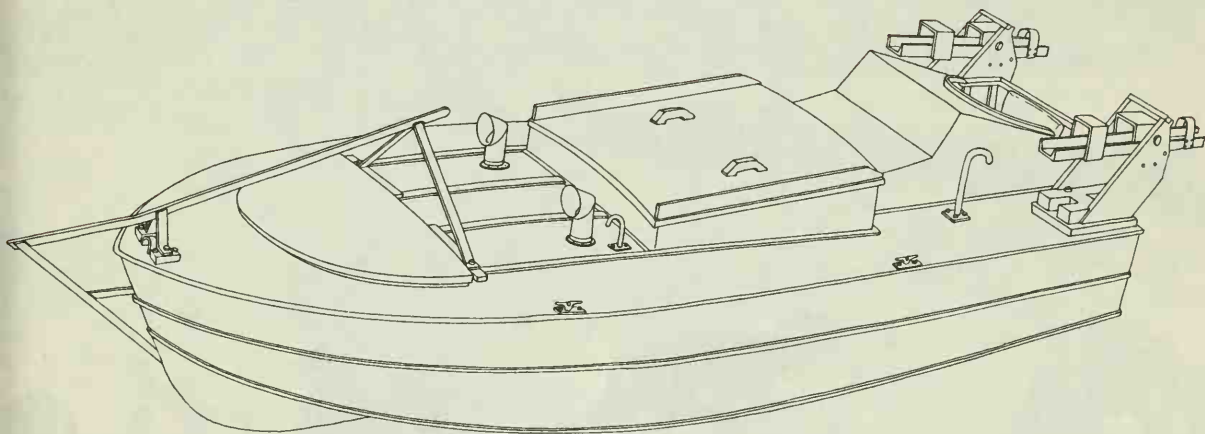
Kawanishi Baika (Plum Blossom) was a projected piloted suicide aircraft which, inspired by the manned version of Germany's V-1, was still on the drawing boards when the Pacific War ended. The Baika was to have been fitted with a 550-lb warhead and the pilot was intended to jettison his undercarriage after taking-off on his one-way mission. *Power Plant* : One Maru Ka-10 pulse jet of 795 lb thrust. *Estimated maximum speed* : 460 mph. *Weight loaded* : 3,150 lb. *Span* : 21 ft 7 in. *Length* : 22 ft 11 in



Nakajima Ki-115 Tsurugi (Sabre) was specifically designed for the suicide mission and was the essence of simplicity. It could be powered by a variety of surplus engines, and a recessed crutch under the fuselage centre section could accommodate a single bomb of up to 1,764 lb. The Tsurugi was designed and the first prototype built within two months, and 104 production examples had been rolled out by the time flight trials were completed in June 1945, although none was used operationally. *Power Plant* : One Nakajima Ha-35 14-cylinder radial of 1,130 hp. *Maximum speed* : 340 mph at 9,185 ft. *Range* : 745 miles. *Weight empty* : 3,616 lb. *Weight loaded* : 5,688 lb. normal, 6,349 lb. maximum. *Span* : 28 ft 2½ in. *Length* : 28 ft 0½ in



Yokosuka MXY7 Ohka (Cherry Blossom) suicide aircraft was conceived for coastal defence and as an anti-invasion measure. The Model 11 (illustrated) was intended to carry a 2,646-lb warhead, and the first powered flight was made in November 1944, the first operational use of the weapon being made on March 21, 1945, the Ohka's first victims being the battleship *West Virginia* and three transport vessels which suffered heavy damage 11 days later. A total of 755 Ohka Model 11s was built, but only a small proportion of these saw action. *Power Plant* : Three Type 4 Mk 1 Model 20 solid-propellant rockets with total thrust of 1,765 lb. *Maximum speed* : 402 mph at 11,500 ft. *Range* : 23 miles. *Weight empty* : 970 lb. *Weight loaded* : 4,720 lb. *Span* : 16 ft 9 in. *Length* : 22 ft 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in



One of many last-ditch weapons developed by Japan in her last effort to stave off defeat was the *Shinyo* suicide boat. They were armed with a large charge of HE or two depth charges in the bows, the idea being that the pilot would set a collision course with a worthwhile Allied target, arm the explosive and then hold on till he collided with the ship. It was hoped that these craft would cause enough damage to sink a medium sized vessel. By the end of the war about 6000 Shinyo boats had been built for use at Okinawa and in Japan, but so far as is known, no Allied vessel suffered major damage as a result of one of these craft. They weighed between 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ and 2 tons, measured 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 18 feet in length and were capable of between 25 and 30 knots on the power of one or two automobile engines. Each craft was equipped with two 5-inch rockets at the stern. The rockets were meant to explode and send out a shower of incendiary bullets to put off the aim of gunners on exposed mounts for guns of 40mm calibre or smaller

Realities on the home front



Food shortages appeared early. Some fifty per cent of the population were ordinarily involved in feeding the nation, but twenty per cent of the rice had to be imported. When the war began, Japan's total food supply allowed an average calorie intake only 6.4 per cent above minimum subsistence, despite intensive agricultural practice and high yields per acre. As early as 1942, the authorities had been obliged to begin substituting wheat and barley for a portion of the rice ration, in view of declines in supply. Later, sweet potatoes and white potatoes had had to be added. The calorific value of the ration continued to diminish, as did the total *per capita* intake of food. As a result

of the declining stocks of basic foods, the daily ration in 1945 fell below 1,500 calories. Although not a starvation diet, this level amounted to about sixty-five per cent of the minimum Japanese standard for the maintenance of health and of work efficiency. In one famous case, a whole family in Hayama was said to be subsisting on the official food ration, but a nutritional expert, who was touched by the report and went to investigate, found that each member was suffering from acute night blindness. Agricultural Minister Shimada had said, in August 1944, that Japan would have to decide whether to pursue a policy of living 'thick and short' or 'thin and long'. Clearly, the second course was being chosen.

Hunger and disease stalked the Japanese populace by 1945; food monopolized their thoughts. A schoolchild evacuee remembers standing in the warm sun under temple eaves and inhaling tooth powder in order to withstand hunger pangs. Others recall eating uncooked, purloined sweet potatoes. When rice was occasionally issued, it proved to be charred. With bowls in hand, teachers would go from house to house in farm hamlets, begging for salt and bean curd for the children. The latter resorted to digging up lily roots, eating mulberries, catching and broiling snakes, devouring wild grass and crabs found in streams. Many of the evacuees suffered from chronic diarrhoea, lice, or scabies.

City residents flocked to the farmlands by the tens of thousands, to purchase potatoes, vegetables, and fruit directly from farmers at exorbitant black market prices, often entailing the barter of scarce civilian goods and personal possessions or clothing. As many as 900,000 persons are judged to have made such forays from Tokyo on a single Sunday. Although transportation of foodstuffs by individuals aboard passenger trains



Philippine women plant rice watched by Japanese guard

contravened the ordinances, no effort at enforcement was being made by August 1945. 'The experience of patronizing black markets,' ex-Premier Shigeru Yoshida has written, 'and of riding in congested trains to the countryside to barter . . . for sweet potatoes or cabbages will remain vivid in the memories of urban dwellers who lived through those grim years'. According to Bank of Japan estimates, black market prices exceeded the official price controls by the following percentages in July 1945: rice - 7,000 per cent; soy beans - 3,000; sweet potatoes - 2,250; beer - 1,667; sugar - 24,000; dried bonito - 3,560. Corresponding percentages for consumer goods included cotton cloth - 4,000 per cent; silk cloth - 1,000; leather shoes - 4,400; soap - 20,000; matches - 20,000; socks - 7,500; charcoal - 4,000; firewood - 2,000; iron kettles - 3,000; saucepans - 4,000; bicycles - 2,600. These data can be corroborated from survivors' recollections and from notes made at the time. For example, one author wrote in his diary entry for 13th July 1944, that one cup of cooking oil cost him twenty-three sen, at the official price. The black market rate at the same time was seven yen. At the permanent rate of one hundred sen to the yen, this means that the black market price for this particular commodity was over thirty times the official price. On average, black market prices of most consumer goods were 4,200 per cent higher than the official prices. Those people hardest hit were bombed-out urban residents, who had to turn to the black market to replace the bare essentials.

Since the armed forces were requiring rice in increasing quantities, civilian consumers were averaging forty per cent less rice than at the beginning of the war. In the spring of 1945, an important Diet member told Prince Higashikuni that rice supplies for May could only be made available to the public by drawing upon stocks reserved for July. By August, rice could be expected to be in critically

short supply. To complicate the matter of the deteriorating food situation, there had also been a poor wheat and barley harvest, attributable to violent floods and storms as well as to shortages of fertilizer and of labor. In a secret Diet interpellation on 10th June 1945, Vice Minister of War Shibayama admitted that it would be impossible to protract the war past spring 1946, in view of the worsening food crisis. As a matter of fact, the 1946 rice year, as from 1st November 1945, began with a carry-over of only enough rice for four days' consumption: 133,000 tons, against a peak figure of 1,178,000 tons in 1941. The 1945 rice harvest was so disastrous (the smallest since 1909) that further reductions would undoubtedly have been required soon, particularly because no additional rice could be brought from Taiwan after April 1945. It is said that an odious flour was milled from bleached acorns. Rice was adulterated by the admixture of unidentifiable ingredients, sometimes seaweed, sometimes less desirable elements.

Insufficient amounts of fruits, vegetables, fish and soybean products were available through rationing. Because of manpower and fertilizer shortages, for example, vegetable production was down eighty-one per cent. Supplies of seasoning were fifty per cent of the 1941 level. Feed entered the black market as foodstuffs. Without imported forage, meat production was down seventy per cent from the quantity at the outset of the war.

Figures concerning the availability of sugar provide another useful index as to Japan's declining food situation after 1944. Whereas prewar sugar consumption averaged thirty lbs *per capita*, by 1945 the level amounted to three lbs. At the end of 1945, the Japanese government possessed only 4,583 tons of sugar throughout the country, as against a peak inventory of 167,000 tons in 1942. From what little sugar was extant, almost all found its way into the black market; no official

ration was available in 1945.

Salt is perhaps an even more critical indicator; apart from being judged indispensable in the diet, salt was vital for the chemical industry, oil refining, and explosives manufacture. In 1945 salt production averaged one-third of the minimum national requirement of 600,000 tons. At a conference on war-making capabilities, conducted in late May 1945, a representative from the finance ministry reported that, unless the situation improved, salt to feed domestic animals would have to be cut off by autumn, when salt production in Japan proper would become almost impossible. After that date, the official confessed to doubts whether there would be sufficient salt for human consumption by 1946, in which case there was 'no guarantee that the fate befalling the domestic animals would not afflict the people at large'.

Although the national slogan remained, 'We want not a thing until victory,' Japanese planners were secretly alarmed at the prospect of famine, especially in densely populated areas, in the event the Allied blockade were tightened, the land transportation system disrupted, and the unharvested fields attacked from the air. Consequently, although there was a desperate need for industrial raw materials, the foreign ministry succeeded in pushing through a recommendation that the last shipping space should be set aside to the greatest extent possible for the importation of salt, cereals and soy beans. This meant an abandonment of the former import priorities accorded iron ore, coal, pig iron, and other non-ferrous metals. Steamships were even allowed access to the precious, dwindling fuel stocks hoarded by the armed forces, so that every last bushel of rice might be hauled into Honshu. Even so, rice imports in 1945 decreased to eleven per cent of normal, and would soon have been severed entirely. Soy bean imports had by now dropped by thirty-one per cent of the 1941 level.

Malnutrition, fatigue, and loss of

weight were accompanied by an increase in the incidence of tuberculosis, especially among factory workers, deriving in large measure from accumulated exhaustion and from food shortages. One factory in Tsurumi reported that a health examination in August 1944 revealed that thirty per cent of the workers were suffering from beriberi. Medical personnel, however, became less available after the incendiary bombing raids began in earnest. In Tokyo the number of doctors decreased from 8,900 to 2,200 by August 1945; nurses, from 26,200 to 3,600. Hospital sanitation and equipment declined to deplorable levels, and medical and nursing techniques became primitive. Serums, drugs, and blood plasma were in shortest supply. Surgical dressings had to be used over and over, often without proper cleaning or sterilization.

Troubles come not singly. On 7th December 1944 a very severe earthquake struck the Tokai area, the southern coast of central Japan, wrecking the long railway bridge on the main Tokaido line across the Tenryu river, and shattering important Nagoya city and its southeastern suburbs. The giant Mitsubishi and Aichi airframe production works, built on reclaimed land, were knocked out for at least a month, and never fully overcame the effects of the shattering ground tremors. The destruction of the Tenryu bridge blocked trunk line movement for weeks.

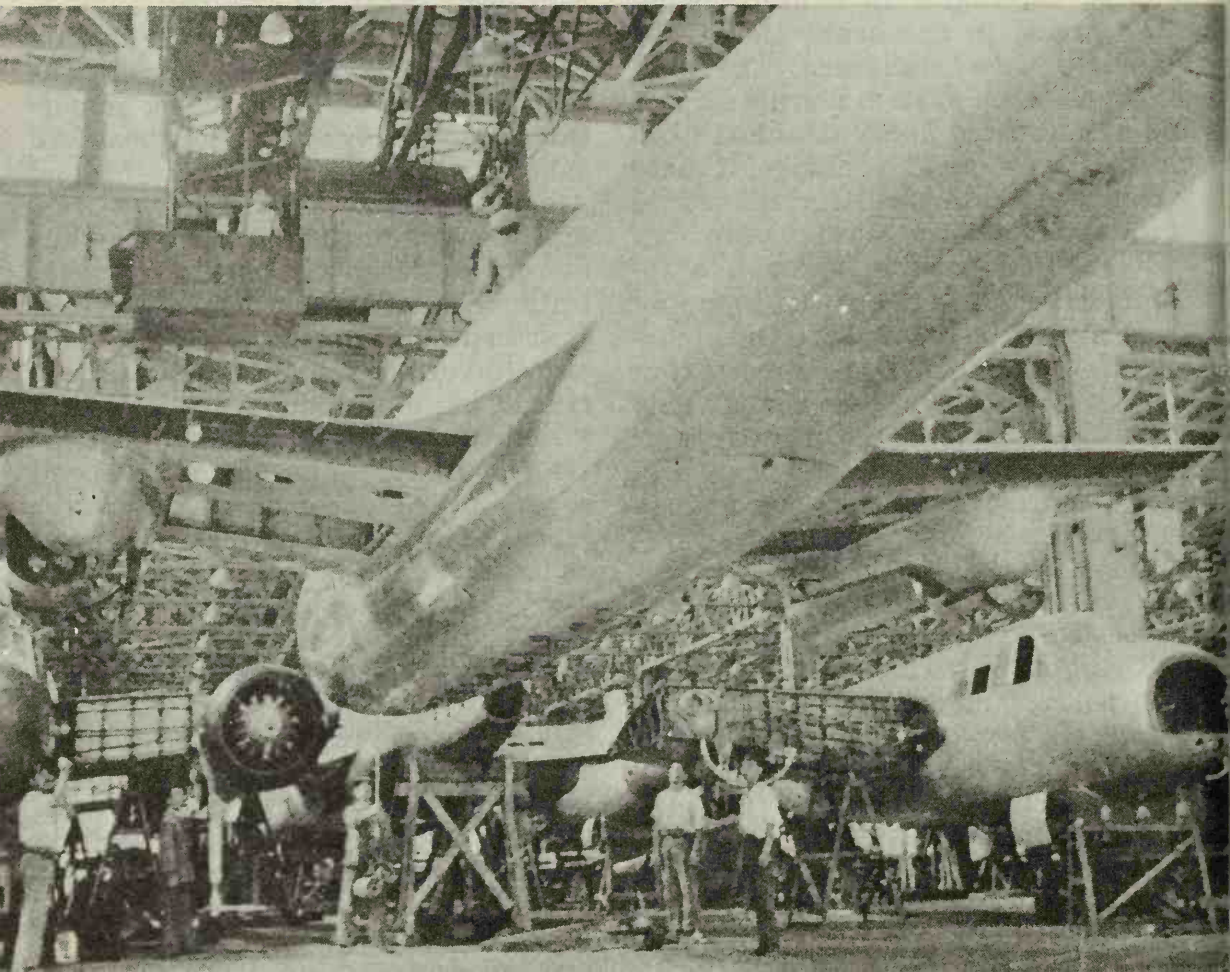
Additionally, the winter of 1944-1945, by all accounts, was particularly severe in all parts of Japan. Water pipes in the cities froze by day as well as by night; one survivor noted in his diary that, during thirty years in Tokyo, he had never before experienced the freezing of water inside the house. Frozen water pipes were useless, of course, in combating the fires set by incendiary bombs. At Osaka, a high-explosive bombing raid in June 1945 crippled the power supply leading to the water department pumping

plant and damaged many water mains. For over a month afterward, there was no water in any of the mains. The damage to nineteen principal mains had not been entirely repaired four months later. In Tokyo and other major cities, electric train service was repeatedly cut off by heavy snows and icing. Despite the unaccustomed tribulations of winter, the populace generally lacked firewood and fuel. Families were fortunate to obtain one sack of charcoal, at the official rate, all winter. In the bone-chilling cold, heavy clothing was also in very short supply. Cotton or wool cloth available to civilians diminished by ninety-two per cent between 1937 and 1945. The ratio of actual wartime production to estimated minimum civil requirements fell to twenty-four per cent for cotton cloth, nineteen per cent for wool cloth, and thirty per cent for silk cloth. At the same time, soap supplies

were down ninety-six per cent from the prewar figure; paper, down ninety-two per cent.

Substitute production often fared very badly. Crude oil was in particularly short supply. From a high point of 12,346,000 barrels in stock during the first quarter of 1942, reserves had fallen to 490,000 barrels by the end of 1944, and below 200,000 barrels by April 1945. Wood turpentine, fish oil, vegetable oil, and charcoal were used as fuel; alcohol for aviation gasoline. Imaginative government chemists worked on many a fruitless project designed to create *ersatz* petrol. Villagers – the aged, the children, the women – took up picks and shovels to dig out the deep roots of giant old pine trees, from which crude oil was to be extracted. One year of such labor produced ten tons of pine tree oil. In another late start, the attempt to produce alcohol from potatoes commenced at the beginning of 1945. In June of that year, the 'War Power Council' explored possibilities of em-

Japanese bombers are built in preparation for war



playing tar as fuel. The chemical fertilizer industry simultaneously devised a product derived from a primitive process of wood-ash leaching as a substitute for potash. Bamboo replaced metals in containers. Alunite was tried as a substitute for bauxite, with limited success. Plastics had to be replaced by wood or glass. It is significant that plain glass, much of it not even shatter-proof, was employed extensively in combat airplane cockpit canopies, windows, and gun turrets, at a time when transparent plastics were common in the air forces of the United States and Great Britain. Wood was substituted, quite late, for aluminium wing tips, tail surfaces and assemblies, and fuselages as far forward as the cockpit. A certain amount of almost one hundred per cent wood-for-metal replacement was attempted in aircraft manufacture. Thus wood was used inside cockpits for knobs, handles, and small control wheels where molded plastics would normally be found. But even the supply of wood fell short; there was a case, in late January 1945, when a coffin could only be obtained by a civilian on condition that it be returned after use.

Economists are of the opinion that the Japanese consumer was hit harder by the war than were civilians in any other major belligerent country for which data are available. More than five million people had been engaged in business before the war; by the spring of 1945 the number had declined to less than two million. After mid-1944, the peak in the Japanese war economy was past; a further rise in total output had become impossible. Probably the level of gross product in the first half of the fiscal year 1945 was twenty-six per cent below that of the preceding year. By July 1945, civilian production, which had been allowed to deteriorate throughout the war, was below the level of subsistence. Durable goods almost disappeared from the market by 1945. It has been estimated that the destruction wrought upon the

Japanese civilian economy in six-and-a-half months of 1945 was as great as that inflicted upon Germany in three years.

Even in prewar days, Japan's railway mileage had been modest and the system of relatively limited capacity. Only two main lines traversed the length of the main island of Honshu, generally close to the twisting sea-coast. Lateral lines were few and of minor importance. On Kyushu and Hokkaido islands, the system consisted of gathering lines which fed the ports and the ferry or tunnel bottlenecks. Tunnels totaled 2,285; ferries, 48; bridges, 42,882. Throughout the system, freight traffic was mainly of the short-haul variety, secondary to coastal and ocean transportation. Consequently the railroads had to bear an unaccustomed burden of longer-haul freight tonnage moved during the Second World War. While the capacity of passenger traffic is said not to have declined absolutely, there were visible inefficiencies in loads. Although long-distance train tickets were often extremely difficult to obtain by individuals (who often had to pay outrageous premiums, handled openly by the spring of 1945), travelers reported empty passenger trains as early as spring and summer 1944, on the Utsunomiya, Karuizawa and, more importantly, Tokaido runs. It should be added that no important improved inter-city highways were in existence by 1945, while the roadway system was primitive and almost entirely unsurfaced. And, by the end of 1944, only forty per cent of Japanese lorries were operational, many of these being charcoal burners. The Japanese had already had to resort to ox and horse-drawn carts and sleds on an extensive scale. But horses were in critically short supply even in the army. Thus the huge Twelfth Area Army in the homeland projected a need for 120,000 horses; it could amass only 2,700.

The vulnerable railway net, mostly single-tracked, was over-burdened,

defenseless, and deteriorating. On Kyushu, only a fraction of the normal train schedules were being kept in daytime. By February 1945, AGS planners admitted privately that the railroads could not be counted on for troop concentration, and that all major movements must be made by night. Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu told Premier Suzuki that, by mid-1945, railway activity would be confined to local districts. Transportation, he stressed, was faced with insurmountable difficulties because of lack of fuel, insufficient cargo-handling manpower, and shortage of local movement capabilities. Railway stock was being utilized long after it became so dangerous that train speeds had to be reduced. Electric power, transmission once disrupted, remained dead for weeks and sometimes months. We know that by June 1945, government railways data revealed daily carloading at an average so low that a comparable figure cannot be found throughout the entire period of the Second World War. Freight tonnage was down by more than forty per cent from the wartime peak. A logistics expert remembers seeing desperately needed soybean stocks piled high, uncovered, at Niigata pier, from which transportation was not forthcoming. In early July 1945 the Americans began tactical air attacks against rail installations and bridges in southern Kyushu, designed to prevent troop transfers. The same month, a single US carrier-based air strike destroyed ten of twelve rail ferries and damaged the other two, on the vital Honshu-Hokkaido line, over which thirty to forty per cent of Hokkaido's coal was customarily transported. This capability was reduced by eighty-two per cent at once, with no prospect of recovery for nine months. Small-scale Allied strategic air operations against the railroads was begun at war's end on 15th August.

With respect to maritime shipping, the Japanese planning board had estimated in 1941 that, if the war lasted

three years, the country would possess a net shipping tonnage of 5,250,000. In fact, Japan had 2,366,000 gross tons afloat by March 1945, of which only 1,560,000 tons were operable. In mid-August the figure for serviceable merchant shipping had diminished to 557,000 gross tons, by which time the built-to-sunk ratio amounted to a mere seventeen per cent. Japan now had only twelve per cent of the merchant fleet with which she had opened the war. The remnants were mainly slow, comparatively small, and inefficient. One of the major effects of the shipping shortage was that pig iron and coking coal, the raw materials needed for steel production, were cut by two-thirds by mid-1944. While steel capacity increased, output fell. Major port activity almost disappeared by the summer of 1945. Against a rated index of one hundred per cent for the monthly average of cargo tonnage handled by merchant ships in 1942, the 1945 average percentages were as follows: Tokyo, 1.2 per cent (nothing since 27th May); Yokohama, 4.3 (nothing since 23rd May); Nagoya, 0.9 (nothing since 27th April); Osaka, 9.5; Kobe, 11.2. Ports fronting on the East China Sea and the Pacific were totally idle. In July 1945, ships were sunk in increasing and significant numbers off the coast of the homeland itself: six northeast of Honshu; fifteen off the Japan Sea coast of Honshu; eleven around Kyushu; twelve in the Shimonoseki strait; twenty in the Inland Sea; twenty off Korea; six off Hokkaido. Perhaps the best barometer of the shipping situation was the strait of Shimonoseki, where only thirty ships (totaling 29,954 tons) were able to pass during the first two weeks of August 1945. One effect of the shipping losses was that deep-sea fishing, a key element in Japan's overall food structure, had had to be largely abandoned. The total fish catch decreased by fifty per cent in 1945, against the prewar figure; fish products amounted to only twenty-two per cent of the 1941 level.

After the fall of Okinawa in 1945, munitions output fell to less than half the wartime peak, a level that could not be expected to support sustained defensive operations against a major invasion of the homeland. In a country where hydro-electric power was much in use, it was noteworthy that in 1945 there was a surplus of electricity available in January, normally the driest time of year – a reflection of the unavailability of raw materials required for manufacture. The decline in production had resulted in growing amounts of unused plant capacity, while the lack of coal indicated that a considerable portion of the industrial areas would have to suspend operations entirely. One factory worker recalls having only three days' work in a month-long period, from mid-January to mid-February 1945; the coal shortage was given as the reason. At its peak, Japanese munitions output had never reached a point more than ten per cent that of the United States, but now the isolation of the country by 1945 constituted, in the words of a Tokyo University professor, 'indeed a death blow to the war economy of Japan, which had been importing almost every item of material from abroad for the use of its home munitions industry'. As early as October 1944, a Japanese economic expert admitted confidentially to Prince Konoye's personal secretary that the country's overall industry might well break down by 1945 from lack of resources.

With only one-third of estimated aircraft production being turned out, in fact, by early 1945, the Japanese authorities' attention was focused on aluminum shortages. The decrease in shipping tonnage drastically affected bauxite supply; seventy per cent of shipments were lost at sea in 1944. Additionally, it had been found that only fifty-five per cent of available aluminum was actually going into plane production. A campaign was therefore initiated, to collect all possible aluminum from domestic

nonmilitary sources. It is said that the Emperor became perturbed by the scale of this campaign and advised that household utensils not be confiscated. Meanwhile, in a most unusual shift of assignment, Japanese military police units became involved in the aluminum scrap collecting drive, and some were obliged to deal with black market brokers. One MP officer remarked, 'We were like sophisticated ragpickers'. The need was demonstrable. By 1945, primary aluminum production was only nine per cent of the paltry peak of 1944. Scrap aluminum was accounting for eighty per cent of the supply available to the aircraft industry, thereby causing a grave deterioration in quality. Imports of bauxite had ceased since January 1945.

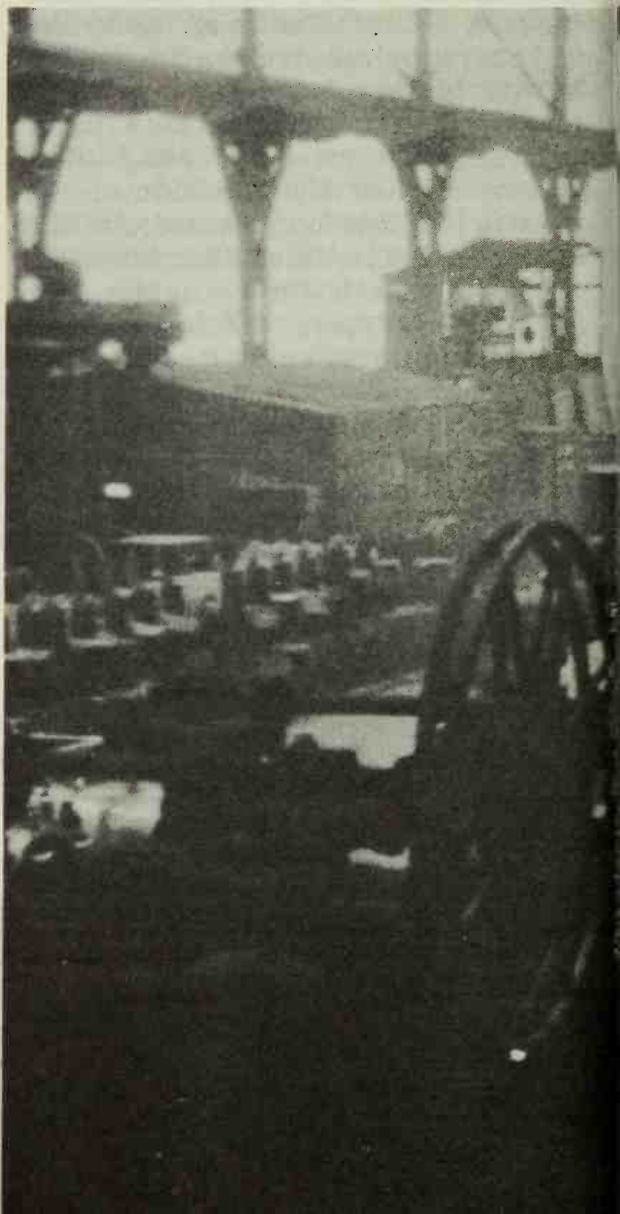
The military police's relative success in three weeks of aluminum scrap collection led to their mobilization to collect scrap iron. At best, Japanese steel production had reached only one-third that of the United States, but the output in 1945 had fallen by fifty per cent from 1944. Bayonets were already in short supply, and the latest old conscripts did not even have swords. Learning from the aluminum drive, the military police now used black marketeers as 'consultants', under a rather more formalized setup designed only to identify sources for purchase by the supply agencies. In about a month of such activity, the military police estimated that they squeezed enough scrap iron from the economy to underpin ten wartime divisions. But the basic estimate made by the Greater East Asia Ministry in 1943 had by now come to pass: '... should there ever come a time when supplies of raw materials from overseas are cut off, we cannot but predict that the continuation of this modern war will become almost impossible'.

Those Japanese in a position to know the country's material weaknesses grew increasingly pessimistic about the country's war prospects.

The thinking of staff officers in the munitions ministry developed beyond considerations of not winning, and entered the realm of speculation concerning capitulation. Raw material stores were drying up as the homeland became isolated from external sources of supply. Enemy resources appeared to be vast and limitless. Given this outlook, the military police commenced a vain surveillance of the defeatist munitions ministry. On the positive side, efforts were made to hearten the ministry and to introduce greater self-discipline and determination. The thought police soon found that the munitions staff was infected by indolence and low morale. 'In such a time of national crisis,' noted one counterintelligence officer, 'the main temple of wartime production (the munitions ministry) mainly lacked the will to win, or else they may already have given up on the war'. It was known that a section chief, a navy captain, had greeted the new year 1945 by advising his subordinates that the year marked Japan's defeat, and by counseling them to be ready to flee at any time. No case could be made against this officer by the army, and he was turned over to the navy ministry for administrative punishment. In February 1945, retired General Tojo admitted privately: 'It is really serious that the fighting spirit of the people has deteriorated since the food situation became so tight, and that the intelligentsia harbor feelings of certain defeat'. Later, in June, Tojo was sufficiently agitated to go to see War Minister Anami and encourage the army to remain stouthearted, because Navy Minister Yonai and Foreign Minister Togo had given Tojo the impression of being agreeable to a surrender at any moment.

Domei News Agency correspondent Masuo Kato became convinced that

no successful Japanese resistance was any longer possible, and that perhaps the country was continuing to fight only from habit and because it did not know how to stop. Kato judged that by the summer of 1945 Japan's war had been lost irrevocably, and that the leaders - 'floundering in dissension and indecision - knew this well, although the general public could not. Terrorized and ignorant, the people might 'feel in their skin' that all was not well, but they were obliged to cling desperately to a world of myths, till the end. Nevertheless, Japanese civilians' discontent with the military became especially intense after enemy planes came freely to dominate the skies over the homeland. In one case in Tokyo in March 1945, following

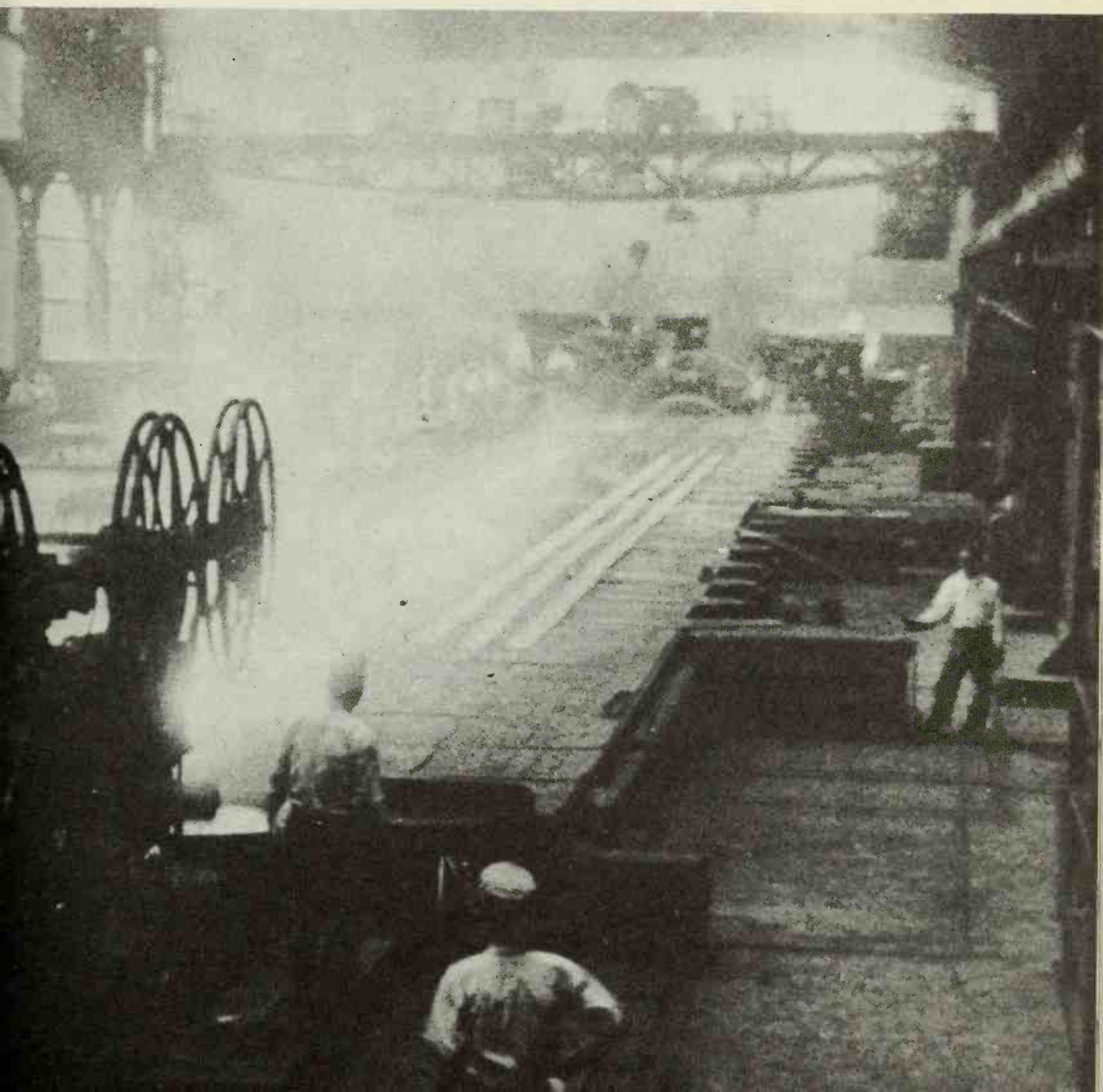


Steel rolling mill in action as heavy industry is geared up for arms production

the great fire raid, exhausted and depressed refugees railed bitterly against and drove away several army staff officers who had roared up in two sedans, had splashed mud on the homeless group, yet had the effrontery to try to conduct an 'inspection'.

Subjective conjectures concerning the state of civilian morale are supported by classified surveys conducted by the supreme war direction council since the spring of 1945, when the Allied air offensive was reaching a crescendo. The Japanese military and civilian analysts, in a remarkably forthright wartime document, reported evidence of declining civil morale, black-marketing, and corruption, growing distrust in the leadership, and criticism of the military and

government. Although inherently patriotic, the public was revealing egotism, lack of spirit, despair and resignation, restlessness, peace-mongering, and even revolutionary tendencies. The president of the privy council admitted at an Imperial conference that public morale had obviously been lowered, that public willingness to glorify the best traditions of the ancestors might suffer 'under certain circumstances'. Of equal significance, at a meeting of all deputy chiefs of staff of the armies in the homeland on 25th July, an AGS planner stated frankly that the intelligentsia were 'anti-war, anti-military, and anti-government'. Their attitude, the colonel said, reflected the very last stage of a war.



When the enemy lands

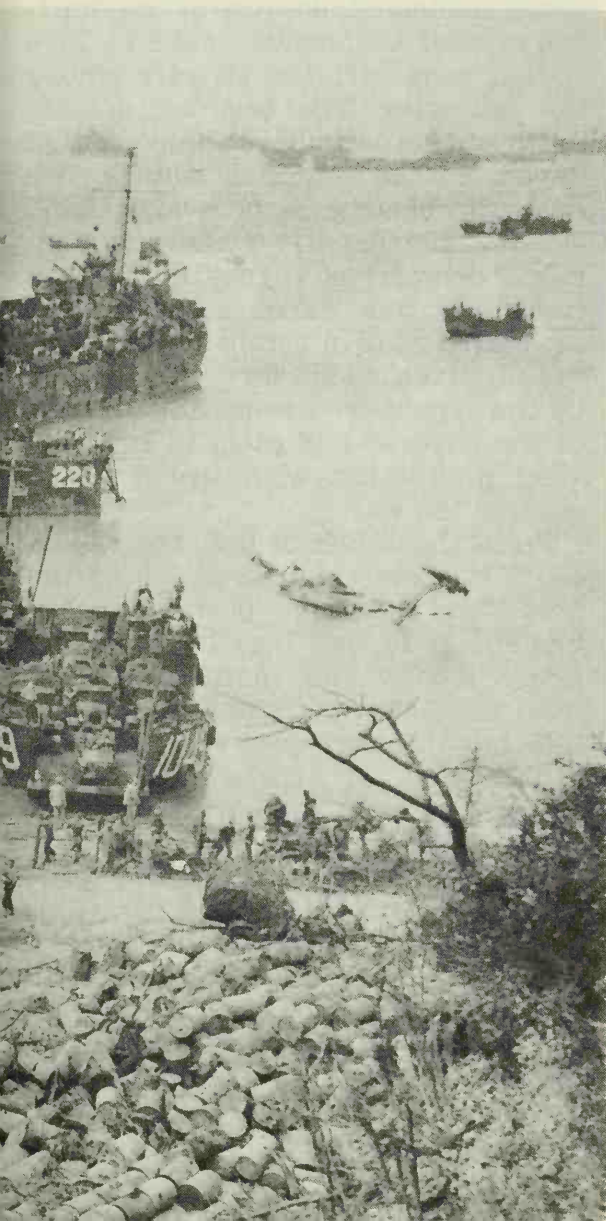


The Japanese began the Pacific war by seeking to neutralize or seize every hostile air base which was within bombing range of the homeland and which an enemy might have used for staging raids. It was also hoped to knock out hostile aircraft-carrier capabilities of dispatching fighter-bombers against the home islands. The defeat in the Marianas islands in mid-1944, however, meant that the Allies had penetrated the central defense perimeter connecting the Bonins, the Marianas, and the Banda Sea, thereby upsetting Japan's strategic position. Direct landings against the homeland could no longer be ruled out. Consequently, from July 1944, emphasis was placed on the defense of the core zone between

southern Kyushu, the Nansei islands, Taiwan, and the Philippines. The worst was expected after the middle of 1945; as early as August 1944, the high command conceived the idea of decisive battle in the homeland.

IGHQ anticipated that the Allies would intensify their aerial and naval operations throughout the Pacific and would seek to neutralize the home isles. Japan proper was already in process of being isolated from the Asian continent and from the region of the southwest Pacific. Attrition of Japanese production resources had begun, as had demoralization of the civil populace. The main Japanese naval, air, and field forces were being engaged and destroyed, as at Leyte. Next the homeland would be brought within range of land-based fighter aircraft. From spring 1945, IGHQ also expected to encounter enemy operations designed to advance the strike bases around Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Taiwan, central China, and perhaps south China, Hainan, and the Kuriles. If Japanese strength were eroded sufficiently after Iwo fell, the enemy might invade Japan directly by summer 1945. Ordinarily, however, the foe was expected to consolidate positions in the Philippines and Marianas and to accelerate a build-up for the invasion of the homeland, a process which ought to be completed by August or September 1945. From the Japanese expeditionary forces in China came the recommendation to Tokyo, in early January 1945, that a final ground campaign be mounted to knock out Chungking before the Americans landed on the southeast China coast in mid-year.

With the intensification of Allied pressure from all sides, especially since the fall of Saipan, strengthening of homeland defenses commanded Japanese attention. Yet, according to a secret Japanese evaluation made at the time, the situation was deplorable. Greater progress was, in



Okinawa beachhead



War Minister Hata

fact, being achieved outside the country, in the Bonins, Ryukyus, and Taiwan. Considerable strength had also had to be diverted to defend the Philippines. In Japan itself matters were not proceeding smoothly. Labor was lacking, and there were difficulties with mobilization and billeting, food and weapons, jurisdictions and duties. Countrywide war weariness was deepening.

Defending the home islands were four ground armies numbering only eight line divisions (one in Kyushu and five in the Kanto area), plus three brigades, four anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) divisions disposing of 1,200 guns, and fourteen depot divisions. Normally there were two air armies, but the one based on the Kanto district possessed an operational strength of merely fifty planes, and the other (on Honshu) was only a training force. The three air defense divisions comprised less than 800 army and navy fighters. Coastal defenses were behind schedule and secondary sectors were still in the planning stage. The construction of semi-permanent artillery sites was proceeding satisfactorily but infantry position work was lagging badly.

Only around Ariake bay in south Kyushu were the positions more than forty per cent completed; in the Toyohashi and Hachinohe sectors the progress amounted to only ten per cent of the goals. In the Kanto region, where construction had just begun, most of the fortification details were left to the judgement of the local commanders, since the high command had drafted no definitive guidelines. Inspectors later found most of these works to be inadequate or even worthless. Weapons were poor, manpower quality was deteriorating, ammunition was short, and training levels were primitive. Prince Higashikuni heard, late in 1944, that AAA unit commanders were not able to fire live ammunition during training exercises in the homeland, because of the shortage of steel and, hence, of shells. Live rounds were rationed strictly among the batteries. The best air defense units had actually been shipped out of Japan, to the southern islands. 'We have toothless gaps here and there, causing the defense system to collapse,' complained Higashikuni. 'I feel insecure'. One Japanese economist estimated that in combat the Americans fired ten rounds for every one fired by the Japanese – a reflection, in part, of the adverse 1:16 ratio in iron and steel production with which Japan entered the war.

From the outset of 1945, the Japanese High Command struggled to improve the defensive posture in the homeland. It was hoped to transfer many troops and munitions home from the Asian mainland by autumn 1945, but this task grew more difficult in the face of accelerating Allied surface, air, and submarine assaults. Inter-service controversies complicated the situation, particularly so far as homeland air defense operations were involved. The army, for example, insisted upon maximum air effort in the East China Sea region, whereas the shattered navy air arm considered this concept to be piecemeal and premature.

In January 1945, the first joint army-navy operational plan was finally devised, stressing decisive combat in the homeland but the gaining of time through delaying actions on the periphery, especially at Okinawa (and in the Philippines as long as possible). Surprise and 'special-attacks' (*Tokko*: a euphemism for suicidal sea and air assaults) were to be the main features of Japanese strategy. Navy flyers were expected to hit aircraft-carriers and warships; army flyers, the relatively easier targets of troopships. Later, in May 1945, it was agreed that all air forces should converge against transports in convoy. The front line of the new heartland perimeter would extend from the southern Kuriles to the Bonins, Ryukyus, Taiwan, east China, and South Korea. Operational preparations against enemy landings would be accomplished in early 1945 at Iwo Jima, Taiwan, Okinawa, Shanghai, and South Korea; and, in the homeland, the Kanto, Kyushu, and Tokai (Eastern Sea) regions. Special emphasis would be given to air defense of these districts, lines of communication, and the metropolitan and industrial complexes of Tokyo, Osaka-Kobe (Hanshin), Nagoya, and Moji-Kokura-Yawata. In the main battle theater of the Pacific and the East China Sea, every effort would be made to destroy the attackers while they were still on the water. Enemy forces which got ashore within the homeland defensive perimeter were to be engaged by local ground forces, without immediate reinforcement from other theaters.

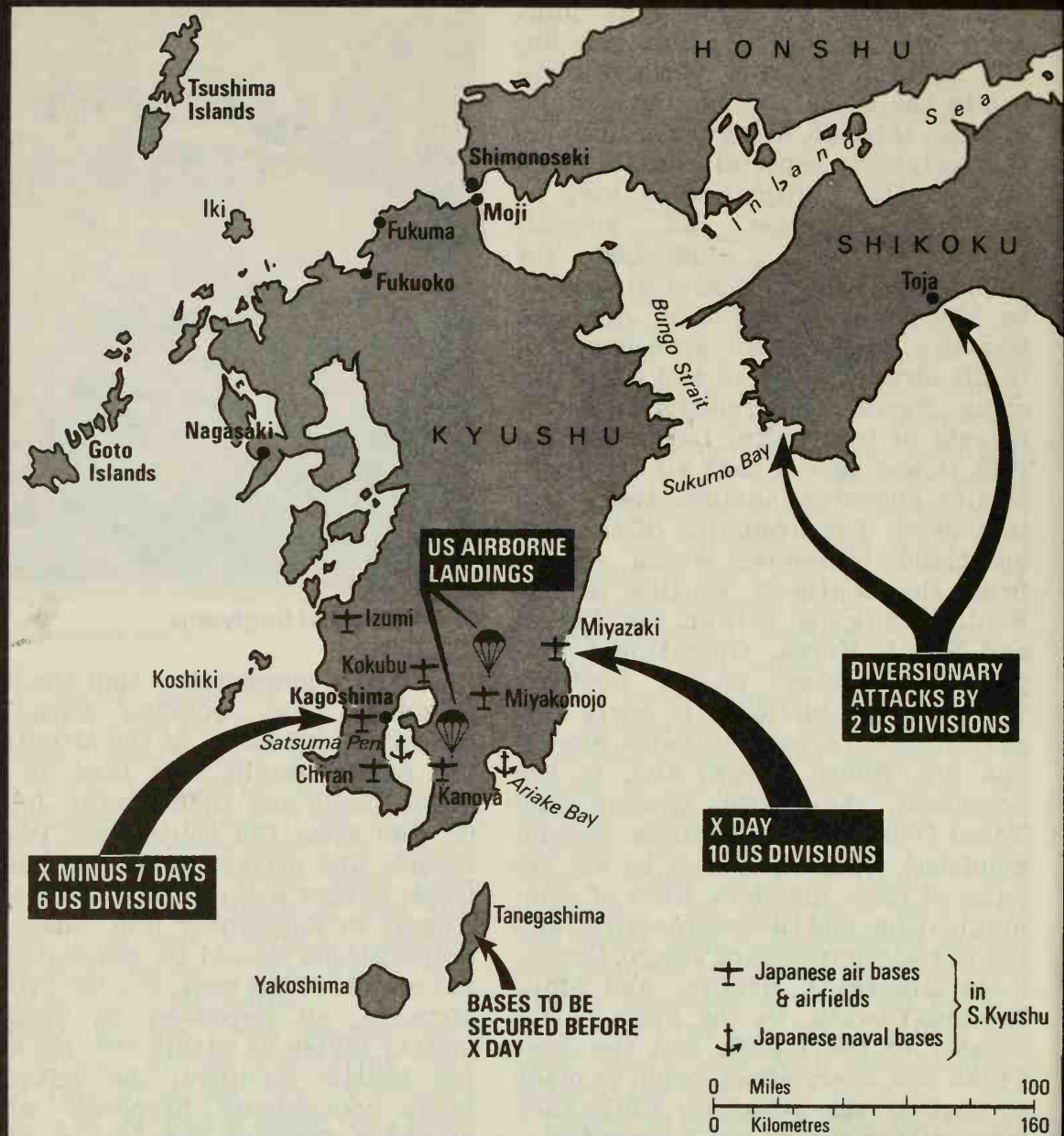
Operations Bureau Chief Miyazaki clarified AGS thinking for the first time at a secret conference on 6th February 1945. The High Command expected a turn in the combat situation as a result of the impending decisive battle for the homeland. IGHQ planned to complete military preparations, on the part of sixteen divisions for the time being, by mid-year. General Miyazaki also told the



Field-Marshal Sugiyama

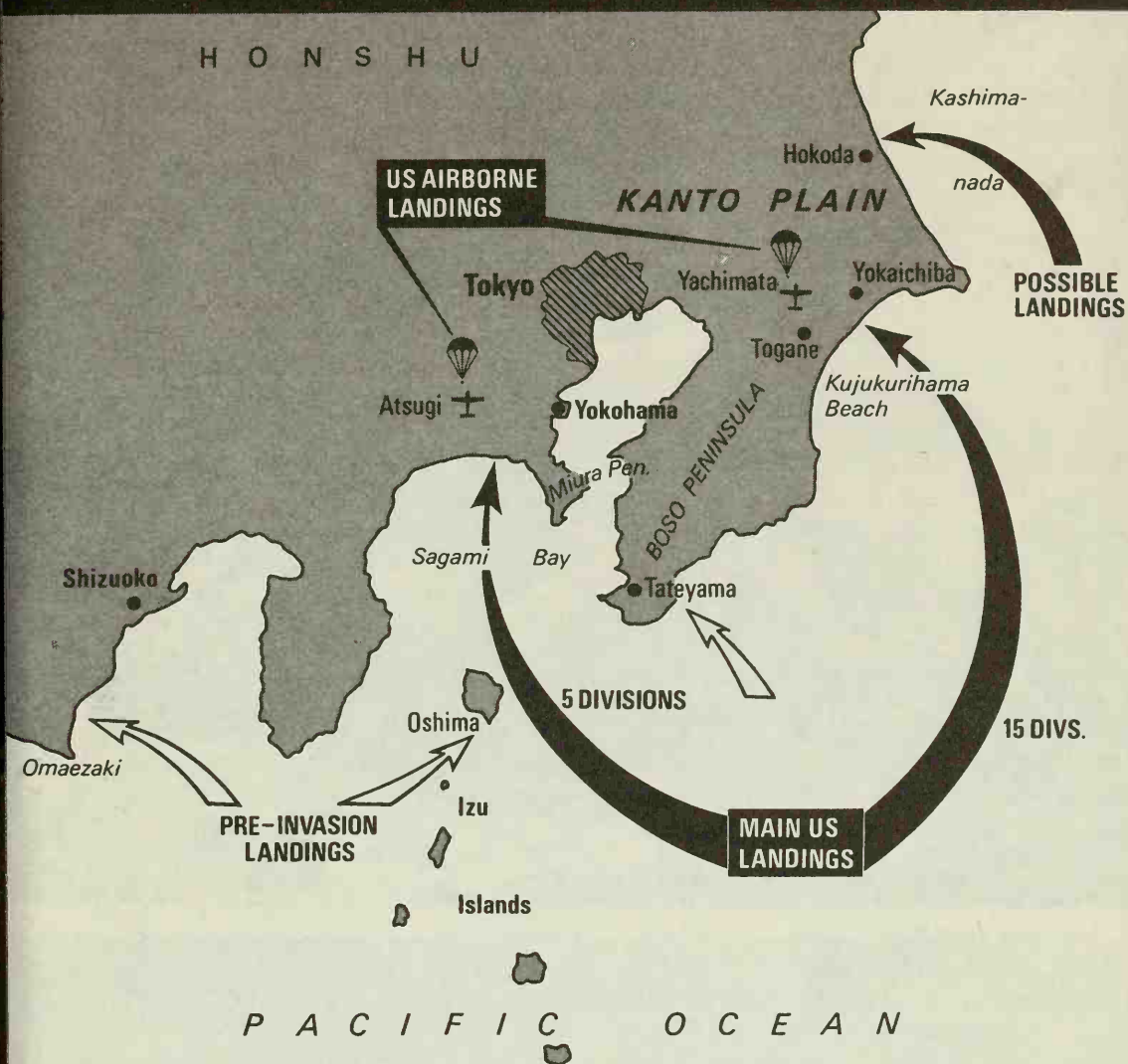
local army commanders that the High Command was working with the following estimates of the situation: the enemy might first land on the China coast and then invade Japan; or else seize the south-west Pacific islands and strike at the homeland. Great danger was to be expected after August or September 1945. Therefore preparations should be completed by the middle of the year. For the ground struggle, all depended on massing twenty divisions within two weeks of the hostile landings; the defenders must concentrate firepower which exceeded that of the foe by three times locally. Since railway movement could no longer be depended on by day, troops should be shifted by night. The deployments should embrace five divisions for northern Honshu; ten for the Kanto; five for Tokai (Eastern Sea); four for Chubu (central Honshu); four for Kyushu; five for reserves of Tokai, Kanto, and northern Honshu; three for mid-western Honshu; and three for South Korea.

AGS and war ministry staff officers indulged in very heated arguments in February 1945 concerning how and where to find the manpower necessary



Japanese anticipation of United States invasion plans

H O N S H U



✈ Japanese airfields

0 Miles 60
0 Kilometres 160



to raise the number of divisions deployed in Japan, Hokkaido, and Korea to thirty-one by March, to forty-one by July, and to fifty-nine by August. One colonel fumed: 'It is as unrealistic as asking a twelve or thirteen-year-old girl to give birth'. Eventually it was decided that immense manpower levies were to be raised within a few months, in three stages, on the basis of the new operational plans and drawing upon the Kwantung Army in Manchuria: fifty-six divisions, thirty-eight brigades, logistical and administrative support units, etc., involving between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 new men. Between 2nd January and 19th June 1945, the Emperor, in full-dress army uniform with sword and medals, presided at eight palace ceremonies where 103 regimental colors were bestowed - for 103 new regiments. Army headquarters were abolished and replaced by operational area army headquarters and army district

Marines in Saipan



headquarters, mainly in charge of military administration at Sendai, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka. A mobile reserve, Thirty-sixth Army, was set up on the Kanto plain. Military police in the homeland were more than doubled in manpower, from 9,000 officers and men to 20,000. But munitions soon proved to be a serious bottleneck. Stocks of light machine guns to outfit the new units, for example, amounted to only twenty-three per cent; of small arms, fifty per cent; of infantry cannon, twenty-eight per cent. Materiel would have to be brought in from the Kwantung Army or from the navy, or else produced in 1945; but priority had to be accorded the production of 9,000 special-attack boats and 16,000 planes.

In February-March 1945, the American conquest of the 'unsinkable aircraft-carrier' *Iwo Jima* threw a chill into IGHQ. Enemy penetration of the East China Sea area could not be far off. By March, American carrier aircraft were neutralizing bases in central and southern Kyushu and in Shikoku; the German armies were being beaten in the west; and the USSR had begun to deploy troops from Europe to Siberia. IGHQ therefore hurriedly completed a voluminous plan for homeland defense operations against the initial direct invasion (coded KETSU-GO and disseminated formally in early April): KETSU-1: Hokkaido-Karafuto-Kuriles; KETSU-2: northern Honshu; KETSU-3: Kanto; KETSU-4: Nagoya-Shizuoka; KETSU-5 western Honshu-Shikoku; KETSU-6: Kyushu; KETSU-7: Korea. The Ryukyus were designated the focal point on the perimeter, Kanto and Kyushu, in the home islands.

Hit-and-run raids were to be conducted against forward enemy attack bases, to thwart the launching of an invasion into the zone of the East China Sea. In Japan, exploiting the unique terrain and exhorting the fighting spirit and fanatical patriotism of the hundred million Imperial





subjects, all navy and air force remnants were to undertake the death-defying special-attack mission of annihilating hostile forces while still at sea, even at the temporary expense of the air-defense and tactical-support capability. Since Japanese naval power was almost destroyed and the air units were so feeble, homeland ground formations (deployed in depth and massed speedily in decisive battle sectors) would take the offensive against enemy troops who managed to get ashore, would overwhelm and eliminate the hostile landing force in the coastal area before the beach-head was secure, and would 'recoup in one stroke the declining fate of the empire'. Defenses must be strengthened at important straits (Bungo, Kii, Shimonoseki) and bay entrances, and sea routes to the continent protected. Enemy airborne penetrations must be forestalled.

Emergency defense preparations would have to be accomplished between April and July 1945; by early June in the case of Kyushu and Shikoku. Reinforcement would be effected during the second stage, August-September; and the entire program would be completed thereafter. Provision must be made to rush reserves to the main landing theaters, whether Kyushu or Kanto. In anticipation of enemy disruption of sea and rail transportation lines, the troops were to move on foot essentially; maximum use was to be made of secondary routes. This meant that defensive planning time factors had to be protracted, although the enemy's own landing operations were expected to be executed swiftly. For example, it might take sixty-five days to move Japanese divisions from Kyushu to the Matsumoto-Nagano sector of Honshu, and another ten days to deploy them into the line. To move mechanized divisions as soon as enemy intentions were 'sensed', it was decided to operate only by night and to



seek cover in prepared tank ditches by day, echelon by echelon.

Operational success would be sought through exploitation of the traditional spirit, 'Every citizen a soldier'. Guerrilla resistance was envisaged as part of the overall operation to support line units, to cope with airborne raiders and small secondary amphibious landings, and to cut off and harass units which penetrated into the interior. Guerrillas were to obstruct and cause attrition to enemy activities, by means of combat, espionage, deception, raids on rear areas, and demolitions. Guard units and civilian defense organizations would provide the manpower, built around cadre elements of the field forces and responsible to the district army commanders. The plans also contemplated a possible need to quell public disorder resulting from air

raids, bombardment, invasion, propaganda, or natural disaster. Area self-sufficiency must be stressed, especially with respect to food, materiel repair, and procurement of designated types of arms and equipment. The homeland logistical core would consist of 2,903,000 men, 292,000 horses, and 27,500 motor vehicles. Only in Kyushu and the Kanto would full ammunition allocations be available in operational stockpiles. Special-attack units would have first call in all supply matters.

Tactical concepts for defense of the homeland were divided into four phases:

1. Submarines would disrupt enemy communications prior to sortie of the convoys; submarine-based planes and long-range bombers would attack hostile forward bases by surprise.
2. Long-range navy bombers and short-range submarines would attack elements of the enemy invasion force when it entered the outer aerial perimeter. After the main invasion convoy came within 200 miles of Japan, all army and navy special-attack air forces and midget submarines would strike *en masse*. Airborne raiders would hit forward enemy air bases supporting the invasion.
3. When the hostile invasion convoy had arrived, midget-submarines, human torpedoes, and crash-boats should constantly attack the gunfire-support ships and the transports, particularly at night. Long-range artillery and special-attack units would interdict the anchorage. All available firepower was to rake the transports and landing craft engaged in ship-to-shore shuttling.
4. After the hostile forces had landed, defending artillery should shift its fire from waterborne to landing-beach targets. Air and sea special-attack forces would continue to strike. Infantry units of the coastal combat divisions were to counter-attack persistently and continuously, from positions close to the beach, in order to disrupt consolidation of the beachhead and merging of lines.

Left: Blood plasma for a wounded marine. **Below:** the advance on Guam





内務省

機軍なくそ
言流なく聞

密秘なる語

Enemy air, artillery, and naval gunfire would be seriously hampered in identifying targets amid the confused *mêlée* ashore. As soon as hostile objectives had been ascertained, line combat divisions from reserve would move into the main attack area, while defending tanks, heavy artillery, and other elements were committed upon arrival forward without awaiting assembly of the entire counterassault force. Units were to be constantly flung into battle as they came up; they would be committed on a narrow front and in great depth against a shallow enemy beachhead already weakened by the coastal-combat defenders. If properly executed, the counterattacks must result in utter collapse of the beachhead before the foe had had a chance to land his heavy striking elements. Any enemy penetrations into the hinterland would be countered by fierce and determined guerilla resistance.

Formation of sixteen new coastal-combat and two line divisions plus three independent mixed brigades proceeded apace, under the stimulus of imminent invasion, while four elite divisions and the last armor in the Kwantung Army, recalled from Manchuria, traversed the Korea Strait by night. In April, IGHQ directed changes in the homeland command system, although the army was never able to achieve unified command of all ground operations, even during operational preparations, reportedly because of the navy's opposition or apathy. The General Defense Command was deactivated, and a First General Army formed at Tokyo, under Field-Marshal Sugiyama, encompassing eastern Japan and including three area armies, exclusive of Hokkaido under direct IGHQ control. A Second General Army was established at Hiroshima under another field-marshal, Hata, to

defend western Japan and Shikoku, utilizing two area armies. Lastly, Air General Army was set up at Tokyo, under General Kawabe, to command three air armies in the home islands. The US forces, designated the main enemy, were to be defeated in decisive battles in strategic zones of the homeland, especially in Kyushu and the Kanto. Hundreds of air squadrons, mainly fighters, were in process of being fitted out. In addition, the suicide air units were being rushed into readiness. By the end of June 1945, some 2,000 suicide aircraft had been produced.

The Japanese army seems to have viewed the Okinawa campaign in the spring of 1945 as a battle of attrition which must earn time for the homeland defensive build-up. One infantry division, the 84th, for example, was never released from Himeji in Japan to reinforce the Okinawa garrison, which had already been required to transfer one of its own best divisions to the defense of Taiwan. In other words, whereas the navy was interested in staking all at Okinawa, the army viewed the Japanese mainland as the proper scene for decisive struggle. But if the Ryukyus were lost, enemy land-based fighters could operate within easy range of all Japan south of Tokyo, in addition to Korea and the lower Yangtze valley. General Miyazaki admitted to Premier Koiso at an IGHQ conference on 2nd April 1945 that the enemy was expected to plunge against the homeland after Okinawa fell. American forces would undoubtedly attempt landings at key sites along the China coast, in the Korea Strait, and on islands near the Japanese homeland. These spring-board operations might occur sometime in the summer. Subsequent landings in the Kanto area (or, alternatively, first in Kyushu and then in the Kanto) would most probably take place after autumn 1945.

With the collapse of the defenses on Okinawa in June 1945, the Japanese began to fear that the 'jubilant'

The three wise monkeys, Japanese version. Do not look at military installations; do not listen to rumors; do not tell secrets



The military (above) and civilian population of Japan undergo pre-war training

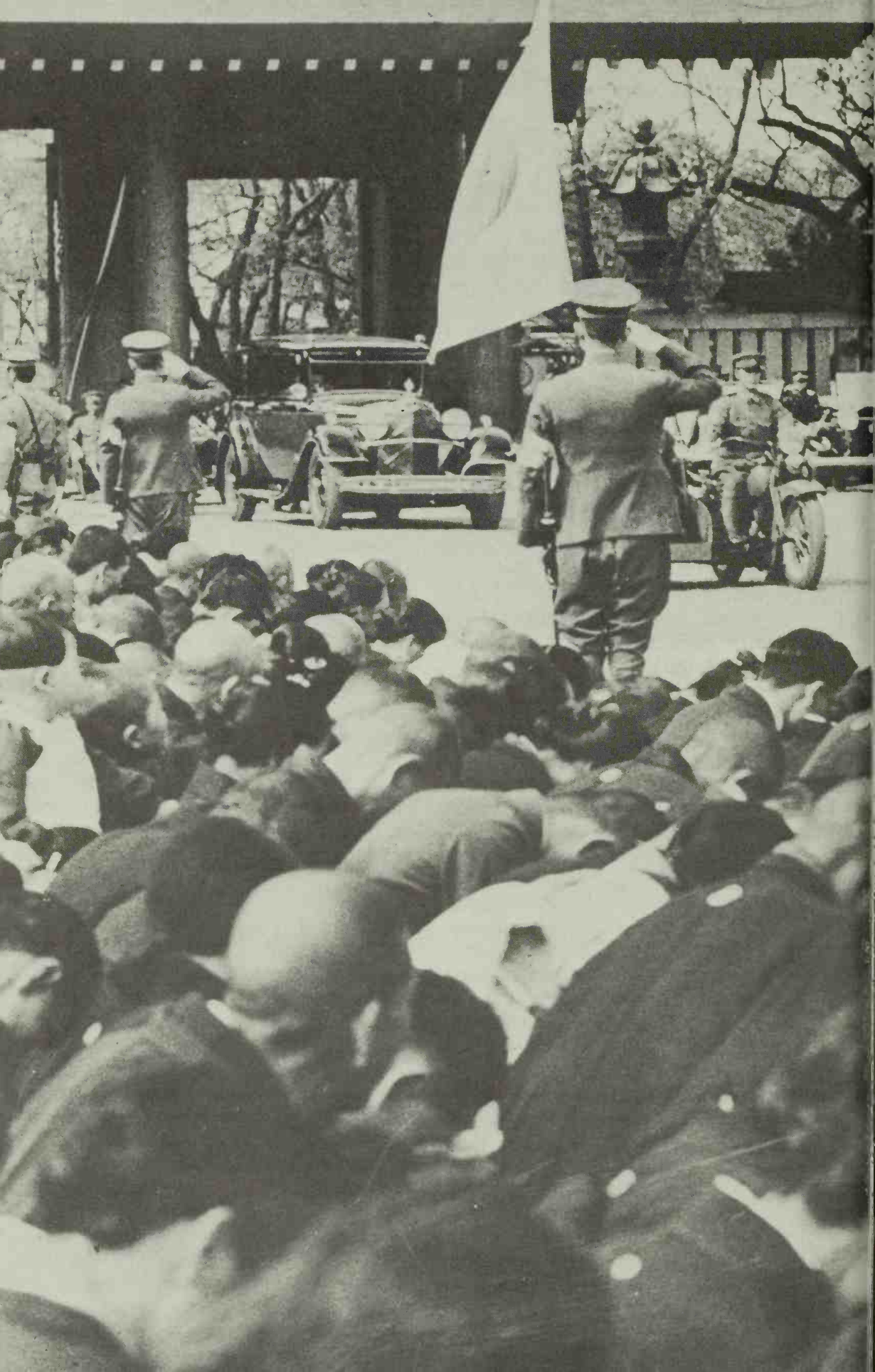


Americans might next assault Kyushu directly, before the lagging defensive preparations had made much progress. Mobilization and redeployment measures were on schedule, but there was ordinarily a time lag of six to eight weeks between the activation of units and the completion of the assembly of cadre and filler troops. Units of the second mobilization scheduled for Kyushu had not even begun to train in early May. Even at vital Ariake bay, only fifty per cent of the projected construction was ready, and the percentage was far lower at Miyazaki, Satsuma, and Fukuoka. Along the coasts of Kyushu, a mere four-and-a-half ground divisions were in place by now, poorly trained and ill equipped. Troops were still in transit, headquarters were not operational, ammunition was being collected. The situation was much the same on Shikoku island, and not better on the Kanto front, where seven-and-a-half divisions were strung along the coast, working on defenses.

After concluding that there was now little likelihood of an immediate invasion from the Aleutians area against northeastern Japan, IGHQ decided to withdraw strength from the Hokkaido region and to shift it to Honshu and Kyushu, leaving only garrisons to defend the more important islands in the Kurile chain. In late May, operational preparations in the Kanto sector were momentarily suspended, and all available railway transportation was diverted to the emergency build-up of southern Kyushu. Units made up of untrained, physically inferior, or old reservists were fielded without full equipment. Even bayonets were in short supply, and mortars had to be substituted for artillery. The rationale was that harmony among the soldiery transcended weapons. But a hard-headed Japanese military observer commented that if the enemy had invaded southern Kyushu in June or July 1945, the country would have faced disaster. Japanese intelligence, however, was

reporting no evidence of an early invasion of the homeland, and the army began to expect no landing efforts against the main isles before October 1945, an estimate which provided vast reassurance. The dogged Japanese resistance at Okinawa was judged to have bought time for the homeland defensive build-up, and the outlook in Kyushu therefore brightened noticeably.

Meanwhile the supreme war guidance council and the government decided that Tokyo must be defended to the last. In June 1945, IGHQ established Tokyo Defense Army. Premier Suzuki told the new commander, General Iimura, that he hoped Tokyo could be defended six months in emergency. Iimura entertained private doubts. The AGS provided no answers to the general's questions about food supplies and guerrilla plans in case the capital were isolated. But an immense position construction program was studied (largely around the Imperial palace and west of the city), essentially as a psychological and political gesture. Underground fortifications were to be built, capable of withstanding assaults for a year; but by the end of July 1945, sites were still being reconnoitered, and geological problems were proving very difficult. Construction would probably have been started about 20th August. Ground units to reinforce the capital's defenses had still not been designated as of mid-August. IGHQ was convinced that the enemy could not invade Tokyo directly, but in case of emergency an additional four divisions were promised, to reinforce Iimura's mere 20,000 men. The defense chief of staff, troubled by the 'six-month' assignment, thought of such desperate expedients as breaking a dam and flooding downtown Tokyo, or conducting street fighting in the red-brick buildings of the Marunouchi business district. The point was, to inscribe in history the fact that the Imperial army, at the time of its death, defended the capital to the



very last. But, privately, the chief of staff had already selected a site for his own *harakiri*.

Against the most dire eventuality, the army had tentatively decided upon a site for a provisional Imperial palace to be located in the suburbs of Nagano city, in the direction of the Sea of Japan. A large-scale Imperial General Headquarters was well in process of secret construction in caves at Matsushiro, in Nagano prefecture, since 1944. Working twenty-four hours a day, laborers scooped ten kilometers of tunnel out of three mountains, at an expense estimated at sixty million yen and 750,000 man-hours.

In view of the capitulation of Germany in May 1945 and the deterioration of Japan's overall stance, acquisition of intelligence concerning Allied intentions grew difficult for the Japanese. Yet by July it had become imperative to draft a new estimate of the situation in order to try to outguess the foe and to mass overwhelming strength against him. Using whatever information was available to them, the Japanese revised their earlier judgements. Signal intelligence and operational observations were helpful. For example, enemy attack and reconnaissance planes were most active over Kyushu, while the Bonins air and sea bases appeared quiet. Tactical air assaults had not begun. The Okinawa operation had delayed the enemy. It was therefore believed that the Americans would not invade Kyushu and Shikoku until after late September 1945, when the typhoon season was over. Enemy bases of operation would meanwhile have been set up or expanded in the Ryukyus, Amami Oshima, and other islands near the homeland. Once major advanced air and naval installations had been established in Kyushu and Shikoku, etc., the foe could be expected to land in the Kanto district and seek a showdown in the spring of

Homage to the Emperor

1946, after redeploying the necessary forces from the now-quiet European theater. Diversions or feints could be anticipated in the regions of Hokkaido and the Tohoku. If the enemy committed forces to the China mainland, an invasion of Kyushu could not be mounted until after late autumn. Meanwhile, if the present rate of Russian military build-up continued in the Far East, the USSR could commence action against Japan in August or September 1945.

The preceding judgement represented a significant modification of the April estimate, for it was now the view that the Kyushu invasion would precede the Kanto landings, and that the latter would not materialize until 1946. Nevertheless, there was by no means unanimity concerning details and alternatives. Some officers felt that Japan's disintegrating posture might encourage the enemy to seek a quick decision, to press straight to the Izu islands, and to land in the Kanto area by the late autumn of 1945. Or, if the foe judged that the coastal defenses were too far advanced in the Kyushu and Kanto regions, he might even try to split the weakly-defended narrow waist of Honshu by pushing from Ise bay against the Nagoya and Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe sectors. Enemy elements might possibly dare to penetrate the Korea Strait and land on the still extremely-vulnerable Japan Sea coast of Honshu.

A number of Japanese planners were of the opinion that the enemy might first try to isolate the home islands from the continent by setting up springboards in central and north China (Ningpo-Shanghai and south Shantung), as well as South Korea or Quelpart island, before invading the Japanese homeland. Alternatively and not unreasonably, it was believed the enemy might concentrate on intensifying and protracting the surface and underwater blockade and incendiary bombing campaign. At a chosen point, the reeling Japanese government might be given an ultimatum to

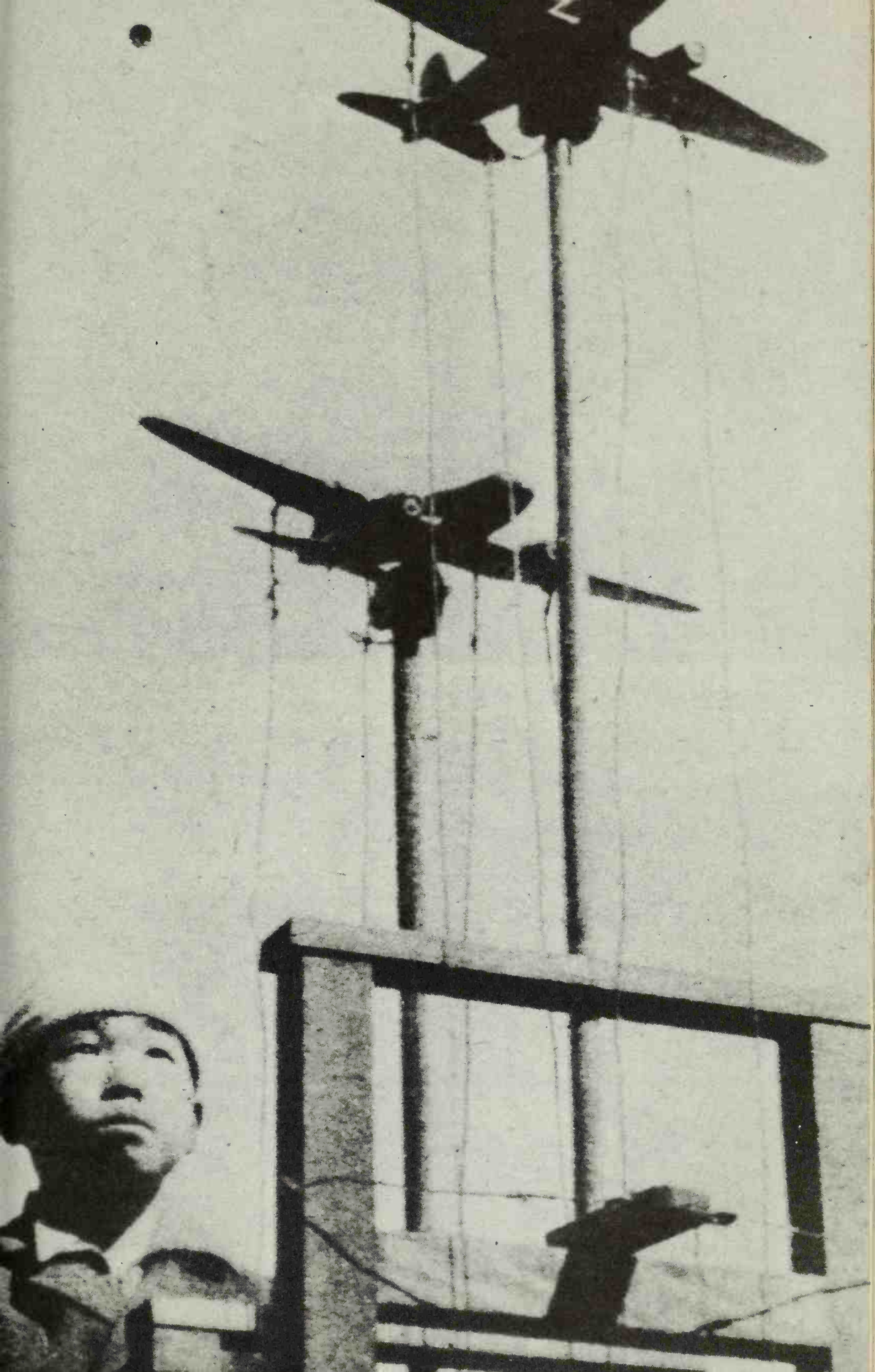
surrender which, if rejected, would be followed by simultaneous landing operations at various key locations. Navy Minister Yonai and others confided to colleagues, as early as September 1944, that IGHQ would be faced with the most dangerous alternative if the foe chose not to invade but instead tightened the strangling noose of aerial and naval pressure. Generals Kawabe and Arisue have said that a majority of IGHQ staff officers actually wanted the enemy to attempt to invade the home islands before the end of 1945. Not only would this give Japan a chance to strike a heavy blow, but it would also mitigate the overall logistics crisis, which was deteriorating so swiftly that the longer the invasion was put off, the weaker and hungrier Japan would become.

From an estimated total of ninety American divisions (including Marines) deployed in the Far East, about sixty – endowed richly in artillery and tanks – were expected to be committed to landing operations against Japan. Using 8,600 warplanes, the US navy and air force would provide all-out strategic and tactical air support. British and Commonwealth divisions in the Orient were expected to increase from sixty-seven to eighty-two by the end of 1945, but it was thought that none would be used in the invasion of Japan. The 3,400 British land-based planes available by year's end were expected to be employed only in support of peripheral operations in Asia; but 700 British carrier-based planes would undoubtedly go into action against the homeland area. US airborne units would probably see service, especially against Kyushu from bases in Okinawa. On one point, most Japanese strategists could agree: an invasion of Kyushu was most likely, although enemy objectives would likely be limited rather than exterminatory. The final battle, however, must take place on the Kanto plain, the political and strategic center of the country, where the terrain was most suitable

for the foe to unleash his armor and mechanized forces. In Tokyo headquarters there was always latent dread of a direct invasion of the Kanto, a fact which prompted IGHQ to hold back strategic reserves (especially of armor) from Kyushu. It was also feared that emphasis upon the build-up of Kyushu would cripple the defense of Kanto if the latter should be attacked by the end of 1945. There could be no doubt that the Allies would want to establish major air and naval bases in southern Kyushu, especially in view of any subsequent operation against Kanto. Particularly vulnerable to an attack from Okinawa, south Kyushu possessed excellent facilities: air bases at Chiran, Kanoya, Miyakonojo, Nyutabaru; airfields at Kokubu, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Izumi; naval bases in the bays of Ariake and Kagoshima. Initially, there was some thought that northern Kyushu might be attacked after Cheju-do and the Goto islands had been seized by the foe: but later it was judged that southern Kyushu would probably receive main attention. If the enemy did assault northern Kyushu, he could be expected to commit even greater strength than was hurled against south Kyushu. The main body would land on the Fukuma coast east of Hakata, elements in Hakata bay and in the Shimonoseki-Moji sector. Beforehand, Cheju-do and the Goto archipelago might be taken, and Tsushima and Iki neutralized.

As for debarkation points in south Kyushu, there were three likely coastal sites: Miyazaki prefecture (Sumiyoshi beach), Ariake bay (right bank of the mouth of the Hishida river), and Satsuma peninsula (Fukiage beach). Until May 1945 the major enemy effort was expected in the region of the Miyazaki plain, but later priority was accorded Ariake bay. Airborne raiders could be anticipated at the airbases of Kanoya and

**Japanese boy gets the feel for flying
on an elementary flight simulator**





The Japanese Kwantung Army invade China



Miyakonojo. Enemy fighter and naval strike points might be set up at Tanegashima beforehand; Koshiki was less likely. In conjunction with an invasion of south Kyushu, some diversionary units, perhaps two divisions strong, would probably be landed on Shikoku island. They would invade the Tosa plain in particular, and Sakumo bay in the southwest, in order to extend enemy air coverage over all of the Inland Sea and to neutralize suicide-attack bases on Shikoku itself.

The highest military circles were not agreed as to the focus of the landings envisaged in the Kanto district. Kujukurihama (Togane-Yokaichiba sector) and Sagami bay (left bank of the Sagami river) would undoubtedly be assailed simultaneously, with the main enemy effort (perhaps fifteen divisions) directed against the former objective, farther from Tokyo but easier to get ashore. Landings were also possible at Kashimanada (Hokota sector), and airborne raiders could be expected to be dropped at the airfields near Yachimata and Atsugi. Some hostile forces might come ashore on the peninsula fronting on Tokyo bay (Miura and Boso). Hostile fighter bases would probably first have been moved up to Oshima, Tateyama, and Omaezaki.

Throughout, the Japanese planners clung to the expectation that *tokko* planes and ships would cripple any invasion force. Suicide operations, in fact, were deemed the key to success in the defense of the homeland, as the AGS deputy chief told an Imperial conference in June 1945. The homeland was not far-off Guadalcanal or New Guinea. Even on Okinawa, hemmed in by enemy naval fire, two-and-a-half Japanese divisions had held off an American army five or six times as large, for one hundred days. The odds against the homeland defenders were far from impossible. This time, for instance, shipping across immense distances would become the problem

of the Americans, not the Japanese. Defending warplanes could operate from improvised airstrips and underground installations. Serious (but ineffective) thought was given to the dispatch of airborne raiding teams against B-29 bases in the Marianas, or surprise attacks by submarine-launched aircraft. Planes were actually readied at Misawa airbase to fly teams out, but the concentration was destroyed by US carrier planes on 14th July 1945. The main strength of the Japanese ground forces remained intact. Enemy successes in the Pacific to date had been based largely upon immense numerical superiority concentrated against constricted and isolated island beachheads. The Japanese army had not yet been able to show the Americans how well it could fight on an orthodox continental or strategic scale. In the homeland, whatever the limitations, there was depth, breadth, saturation density, reserves, and preparation. All material and spiritual resources could be amalgamated to defend hearth and home, to annihilate the foreign invaders on soil that was known and adored. Since there was no escape route, the defense motto would truly be, 'Victory or death!' – and the spirit would be that of the Divine Wind.

Referring to the desired counter-measures, the NGS estimate of June 1945 asserted that although utmost efforts must be made to destroy enemy invasion forces at sea, in case landings did take place in the homeland earlier than expected (i.e., in summer) only fifty per cent of the troops would be able to get ashore, after the suicide assaults waged by the combined services. In event of a delay in the invasion, the possibility of annihilating forces on the high seas would be enhanced. The chief of NGS presented the same appreciation to the Imperial conference in June – a significant increase from the admiral's recent view that sixty to seventy per cent of the invaders would probably

reach the beaches. To evaluate these high-level assurances, the General Air Army and the Combined Fleet conducted map maneuvers at Fukuoka in early July 1945. It was assumed that sixteen US divisions would invade south Kyushu in October 1945: six divisions on the Satsuma peninsula at X minus seven; ten divisions on the coast of Miyazaki at X-Day. The staff officers concluded that suicide aerial attackers would be able to sink some 500 transports and that surface attackers would wipe out another 125. Consequently, one-third of enemy troop strength (the equivalent of more than five divisions) would be smashed at sea. If the special-attack strength were increased, or if a greater number of large enemy transports were encountered, many of the Japanese officers thought it not at all unreasonable to expect to be able to destroy thirty to fifty per cent of the invasion forces; in fact, these calculations were judged to be conservative.

Certain ground commanders, however, considered that a maximum fifteen to twenty per cent destruction factor (the equivalent of knocking out three divisions) might be closer to reality. The premise of 'one suicide plane (or boat), one enemy transport' struck some as unsound. Air Staff Officer Inoguchi believed that in the Philippines only one of every six *kamikaze* planes hit the target; at Okinawa, approximately one in nine. Given the inexperience of the homeland suicide pilots and the lack of defense against swarms of enemy fighters, the special-attack planes committed to defend Japan might hit only one-ninth or one-tenth of their prey, even though they struck in bright moonlight or at dusk against massed targets.

The last Japanese peripheral counterattack operations having failed, the army and the navy agreed in July 1945 upon the decisive KETSU-GO air operations in defense of the homeland. This time it was intended

to smash the enemy transports and troops just before they began the landings. Convoys were to be shattered by *tokko* planes, day and night, at about the time the ships were anchoring at beachheads. The old navy preference for singling out enemy aircraft-carriers and task forces was converted to the army's choice: both services would combine all air strength mainly against the convoys. Ground-support missions would become secondary; emphasis was upon hit-and-run tactics. Highest defensive priority was to be assigned Kyushu, Shikoku, and South Korea. Cooperating with these final counter-attack operations in defense of Japan would be approximately 700 army and 5,200 navy special-attack boats (some bearing one-ton bombs), in addition to the thirty-eight surviving submarines and nineteen destroyers, although the latter lacked fuel to operate beyond Kyushu waters. All key harbor and bay entrances were mined, and demolitions frogmen were to go into action against landing craft.

In mid-July, the army worked out air defense plans in conjunction with the navy. 1,000 regular planes, and 1,600 suicide planes would be hurled into defense of Kyushu, Shikoku, and the Kanto area. From Korea, Manchuria, and even North China, 200 regular and 500 suicide planes would be rushed in emergency. Another 500 to 1,000 *tokko* craft were expected to be fitted out in the homeland by August 1945. Cooperating with Air General Army were to be 5,225 navy planes: over 1,000 fighters, 4,000 anti-convoy and anti-task force bombers, the rest reconnaissance aircraft. A further 600 planes from Taiwan were also programmed to strike at enemy bases in the Ryukyus when the battle for Kyushu got underway. Air General Army would direct operations affecting Kyushu, from headquarters near Osaka; the navy, from the Nara area. In all, then, against the expected invaders, the Japanese could commit



over 10,000 last-stand planes, seventy-five per cent of which were *tokko* aircraft hastily converted from trainers. Two-thirds of the force would be deployed to defend Kyushu at the outset, one-third to cover the Kanto district. A total of 325 airstrips, including simple one-way strips, were being constructed throughout Japan, ninety-five of them at secret sites far inland. The planners were emphasizing dispersion to many small strips, as well as use of caves as hangars.

Particularly discouraging to IGHQ, however, was the local commanders' misunderstanding of the KETSU-GO concept of aggressive beach defense. Generals Kawabe and Miyazaki were insistent there was no assurance that

The rising sun in China

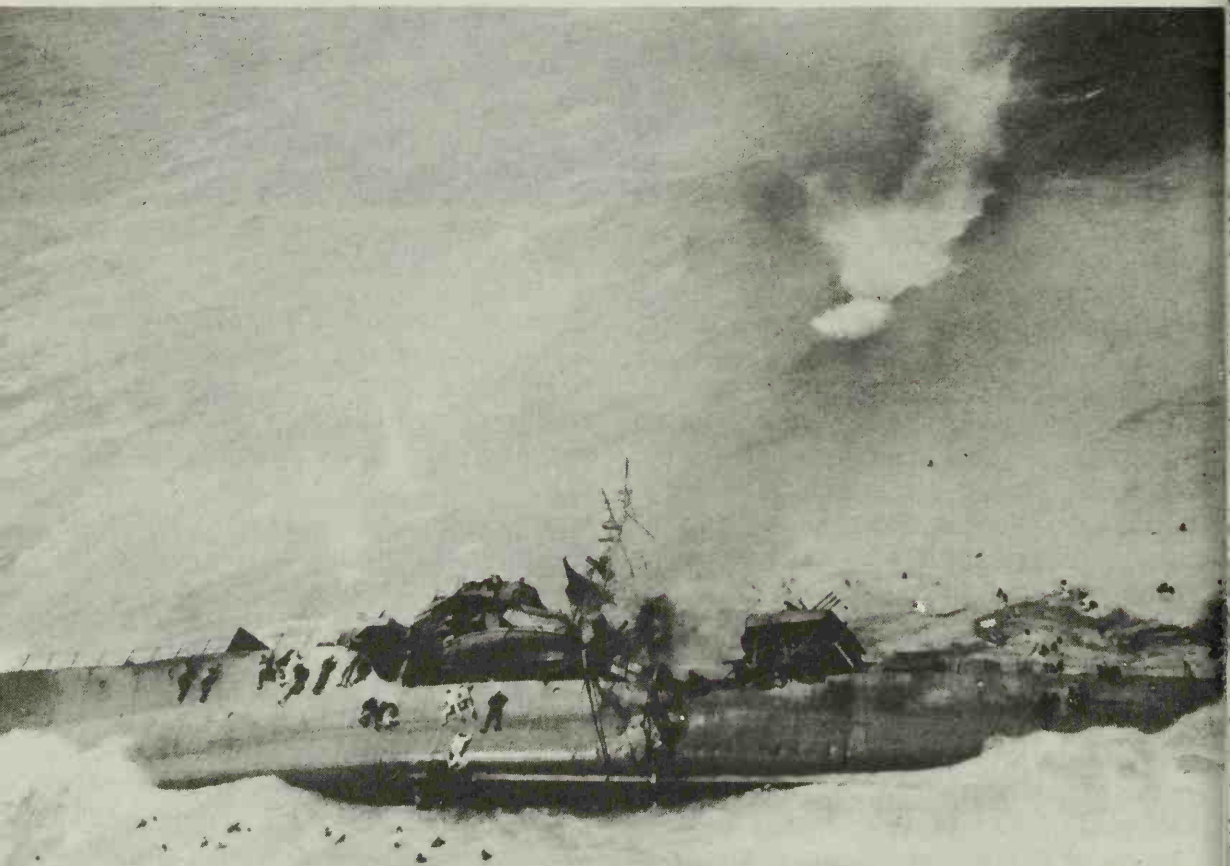
Japanese firepower and *tokko* weapons could successfully penetrate an enemy beachhead once it had been enlarged to the rim of the coastal plain. Additionally, the littoral zones contained all of the large and important airbases, the main trunk communications, and much of the arable land under cultivation.

Many coastal combat units seemed to have learned fallacious lessons from the experience of garrisons defending South Pacific islands and atolls, and tended to construct rallying works too far inland from the beaches. Certainly this represented an understandable desire to evade the devastating effects

of enemy naval bombardment, but the consequences ran counter to basic KETSU-GO theory, which sought to allow the foe no time to seize, consolidate, and expand a beachhead. The experience of Iwo Jima should be the model, not that of Guadalcanal, Bougainville, the Marianas, and Leyte. IGHQ staff officers detected these discrepancies during field inspections in May 1945, with the result that a new and unequivocal manual of battle tactics had to be issued in June. Coastal combat units, entrenched in deep cave and tunnel positions and supported by fortress and siege artillery, were instructed immediately to engage hostile landing forces close to the beach. All available reserves must be deployed with speed and flexibility. Ground operations were expected to complete the destruction begun by the special-attack units. The Japanese estimated that their artillery and automatic weapons fire,

The end of a bombed Japanese destroyer

directed against landing-craft and concerted with fierce counterattacks by the coastal combat units, would reduce the remaining enemy forces by thirty to fifty per cent. The terrain of the Kyushu coast was particularly well adapted to employment of enfilade fire by heavy artillery dominating the approaches to the principal beaches. The spirit of decisive combat was epitomized in the outline issued by the First General Army in mid-July 1945: 'The homeland operation must be a decisive one in which the invasion forces will be quickly sought out and annihilated. The key to ultimate victory rests in wiping out the enemy at the water's edge in the period when his landings are still in progress. The decisive battle area must be determined irrespective of the foe's plans; he must be made to fight at that point. The assault must be undertaken with the resolve that each man will take an enemy to death with him at the water's edge.' It was thought there would be about a week before the



Americans could carve out a foothold. Experience in the Pacific island battles indicated that the enemy needed this time to establish a port or pier for landing materiel, and to construct an airfield for direct cover. During this critical period, the American beachhead would be tenuous; now would be the time for the defenders to concentrate and to strike with all possible speed and strength. The Second General Army, for example, had hopes of counter-attacking and repulsing an invading army by employing beachline defense forces outnumbering the enemy who actually got ashore, by a ratio of 3:1 amassed within one week.

To ensure that beachline combat was enforced strictly, all 'unneeded' AGS staff officers, of all ranks, were assigned to frontline corps, generally their home districts. These officers themselves were extremely anxious to participate at first-hand in the decisive fighting. Due to the sudden proliferation of headquarters, every corps suffered from a shortage of staff. The usual division chiefs of staff and bureau chiefs were to be replaced by the division commanders assisted by small staffs enabling expeditious decision-making. Another consideration was the possibility that communications might be severed during the decisive campaign, and the defense corps might have to operate on their own. IGHQ could hardly control national resistance under such circumstances but AGS staff officers, who knew the basic policies well, could direct unified fighting.

During the summer of 1945, work was rushed on the still unsatisfactory coastal defenses, hampered by the costly misunderstandings with regard to KETSU-GO tactical doctrine. Operational preparations in Kyushu and Shikoku were far more advanced than in the relatively unhurried Kanto district. Units at the former locations were expected to be outfitted fully by about October 1945; those in the Kanto by next spring. Units in

Kyushu were in satisfactory condition with respect to stockpiling of expendables by summer 1945: ammunition, one hundred per cent of KETSU-GO requirements; fuel, ninety-four per cent; rations, 164 per cent. But even in Kyushu, stocks of equipment amounted to merely fifty per cent of the third mobilization requirements tentatively targeted for completion by 31st August. In Kanto, no munitions and ordnance stockpiles had been established, and ration stocking was only fifty per cent complete.

Beach defenses at main coastal sectors in Kyushu, Shikoku, and Kanto reached sixty to eighty per cent of goals by August. The imperativeness of construction overrode considerations of troop training. Steel and concrete were in particularly short supply. Army inspectors described many of the fortifications as primitive and toylike, hand-made and crude. Commanders complained that the preponderantly middle-aged conscripts lacked stamina for the exhausting and unexciting work of digging entrenchments in the heat. Efforts were made to impress upon the men that their labors were vital operationally. But there was also a very serious lack of geological knowledge. In the Kanto district, college professors had to be engaged as consultants. Problems with subterranean water tables and springs were encountered in such places as the Izu and Boso peninsulas, and in Ibaragi. Lacking electric drills and compressors to dig through rock, the men did almost everything by hand. Those with smithy experience were called upon to fashion chisels. In beach areas, there were difficulties with providing supports to shore up sand diggings. Nevertheless, a staff officer back from 'impregnable' Rabaul called the defenses at Kamakura, Enoshima, and Oiso 'fabulous', and Kyushu even stronger. In general, this expert deemed the homeland defenses good, but his appears to be the opinion of a distinct minority.

Bamboo spear psychology

In early June 1945, at a cabinet advisers' briefing at the premier's residence, one elder put the Japanese army on the spot by asking: 'What if the enemy does not invade this year or next but instead pursues a policy of wiping out Japan by bombardment alone?' The army briefing officer was obliged to admit, with painful candor, that 'that would pose the most troublesome possible course which could be adopted against us'. Late next month, the same colonel was infuriated to detect that the AGS operations staff in Tokyo seemed to be relying on the prospects of diplomatic mediation through the good offices of the USSR and to be lacking in confidence of certain victory. 'Your duty,' he bellowed, 'is only the formulation of optimum operations plans designed to achieve success. Don't give us evasive answers!' With this, he stalked from the conference. Privately, the officer mused: 'Since the core of IGHQ is already thinking in this fashion, how can we speak to

the public about certain victory in a decisive battle for the homeland?' Next day, the colonel was posted to Korea Army headquarters in Seoul.

At this point, one must ask what the Japanese army leaders foresaw as the result of a fierce campaign to defend Kyushu. A number of sources shed light on Japanese military thinking in 1945.

Colonel Takushiro Hattori asserted that IGHQ deemed it imperative to inflict a staggering blow against at least the first wave of élite enemy invaders, thus compelling the Allies to comprehend the indomitable fighting spirit of the Japanese armed forces and civilian population, as well as the difficulty if not impossibility of subduing the home islands. IGHQ, according to Hattori, was of the opinion that Japanese success in the Kyushu fighting could delay and perhaps prevent an invasion of the Kanto district, or allow Japan to negotiate on relatively advantageous terms. Hence victory in Kyushu must

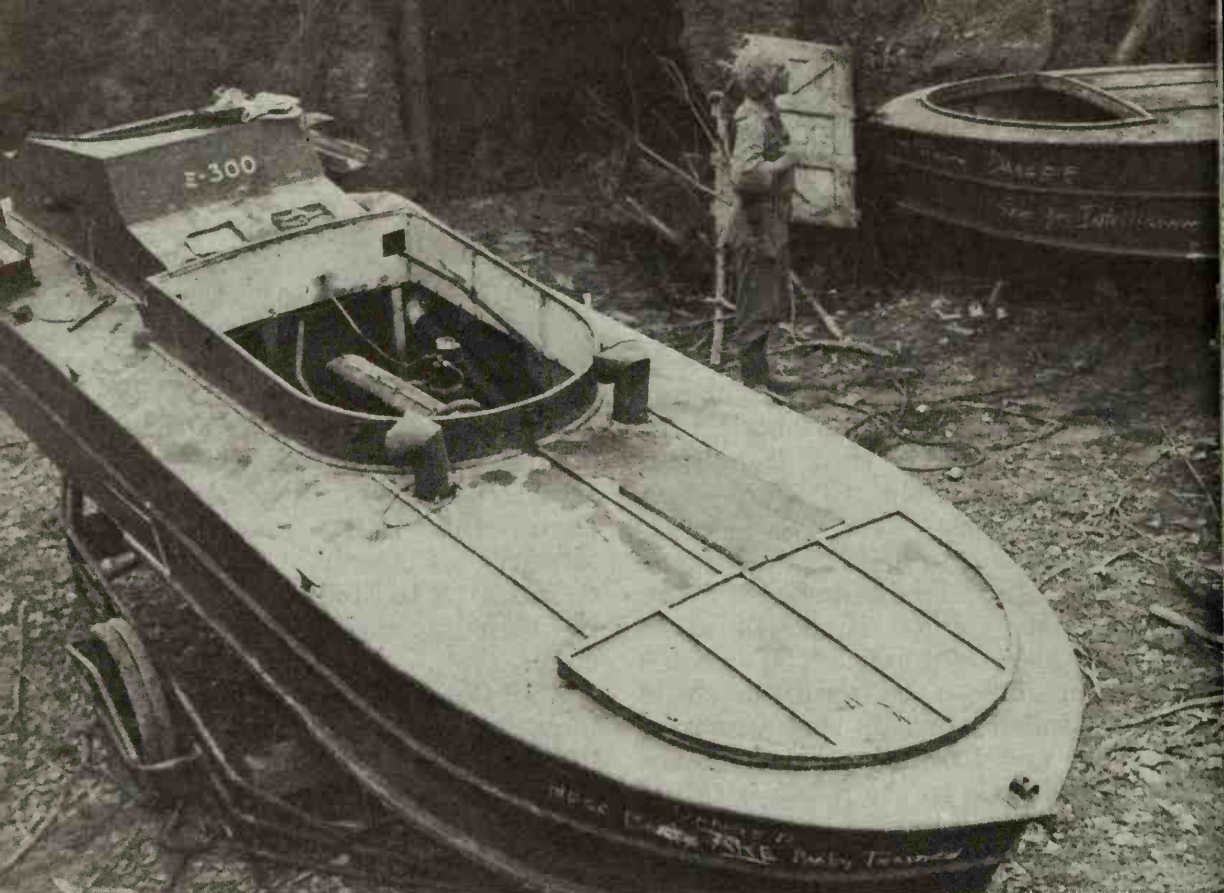
be sought at any cost, for this represented the last chance of obtaining an honorable peace with conditions. The Kyushu campaign would prove decisive in far more than the military sense. There was even growing sentiment that the country's fate must be decided on Kyushu, and Kyushu alone, where ten million fanatical subjects reinforced the fighting troops. Fuel and food shortages were worsening to the extent that the nation might not be able to wage crucial struggle past the spring of 1946; that is, Japan might not be able to fight two climactic battles.

When told in late 1944 that the army was determined to go down fighting to the last, Prince Higashikuni is known to have commented: 'If Japan's determination to be annihilated is comprehended abroad, then Britain, America, and Russia might hesitate to wage a battle to the finish with us, and might reconsider matters... Whether Britain and the USA seek a decisive battle will depend entirely on our internal situation. If our internal unity is strong and our martial spirit high, some opposition may spring up within America about conducting another decisive campaign regardless of immense losses.'

Still, one wonders, did not even the most vocal AGS bitter-enders harbor gnawing internal doubts about Japan's prospects? Prince Kaya intimated to Prince Konoye that the army's espousal of a battle of annihilation was entirely a matter of surface display. A certain staff officer stationed in Chiba prefecture and known for his bravery had admitted that the war was hopeless and that creation of a redoubt in the mountains of Nagano was futile. Even the chief of AGS operations had admitted that, in the material or objective sense (men, equipment, rations), the decisive mainland battle or, strictly speaking, continuation of the war, was 'extremely dubious'. 'Although one can never predict the result till one actually fights, I never thought we

could win. But as operations bureau chief, I could not simply give up. I had to go on. In my diary, I wrote: 'Japan, whither art thou heading? Back to the situation immediately after the war of 1904-1905... the war of 1894-1895... the Meiji Restoration of 1868?' I was thinking that Japan might be set back to that extent.' A Japanese general has admitted that there was some unenthusiastic thought of merely allowing the populace in invaded areas to surrender to the enemy, and of then infiltrating military guerrillas among them. But IGHQ planners termed 'absurd' a Sixteenth Area Army idea to fall back to Mount Aso if the forces in Kyushu were beaten near the coast.

AGS Colonel Saburo Hayashi adds a most intimate glimpse of the army leaders' true thinking: 'As the war situation grew worse, confidence in sure victory was increasingly stressed within the army. From the first, the phrase "to be defeated" was interpreted as "to feel defeated". Stemming from this point of view, adherence to a confident belief in certain victory was emphasized at every opportunity, but the import was not always clear. For example, it was not evident whether confidence in certain victory meant "sure to win and able to win" or "must win by all means"; or whether it involved both of these types of confidences. Most officers and men had an easy-going confidence of winning ("certain to win," and "able to win for sure"), without any sense of effort'. Continued Hayashi: 'Although it was declared that there were prospects of success in the decisive battle for the homeland, this did not imply confidence of defeating the American forces' second and third landings when made continuously. All of the army high command felt secretly (when they considered the course of the decisive battle in the homeland coolly and concretely) that it was impossible to defeat the US troop landings, because of lack of weapons, ammunition, and



Japanese suicide boats found by American troops on Motobu peninsular

food, in case second and third landings were made one after another. This held true even if the initial American landing could be frustrated’.

IGHQ strategists assessed the chances as follows in mid-1945: ‘The enemy is mustering enormous and overwhelming military power for use against us; the issue will be joined between now and next spring. Although Japan is faced with an exceedingly precarious overall situation, certain circumstances are working to her advantage. While the end of the war in Europe has given the USA a comfortable reserve of national war potential, industrial mobilization and reconversion have already begun, due to the desire to grab postwar profits. The fighting morale of the United States is being weakened by fear of large casualty tolls. There has been an increase in labor strife, criticism of the military, and agi-

tation from the ranks to engage in a precipitous demobilization. Should the USA be defeated in the battle for Japan itself, public confidence in the President and military leaders will decline abruptly, fighting spirit will deteriorate in the flurry of recriminations, and Japan will find herself in a much more favorable strategic position’.

But even the highest-ranking government officials were horrified by the army’s primitive notions for militia defense. In July 1945, Premier Suzuki and his associates were invited to visit a display of weapons to be issued to the citizenry: single-shot, muzzle-loading muskets; longbows and arrows (effective range thirty to forty meters, hit probability fifty per cent, according to the placards); bamboo spears, pitchforks. The ordinarily phlegmatic old Prime Minister whispered to his secretary, ‘This is terrible!’ The secretary could only agree, in despair and fury, that there were limits to deception of the

populace. Privately, the aide felt that this was hardly a sane way of fighting in the 20th Century.

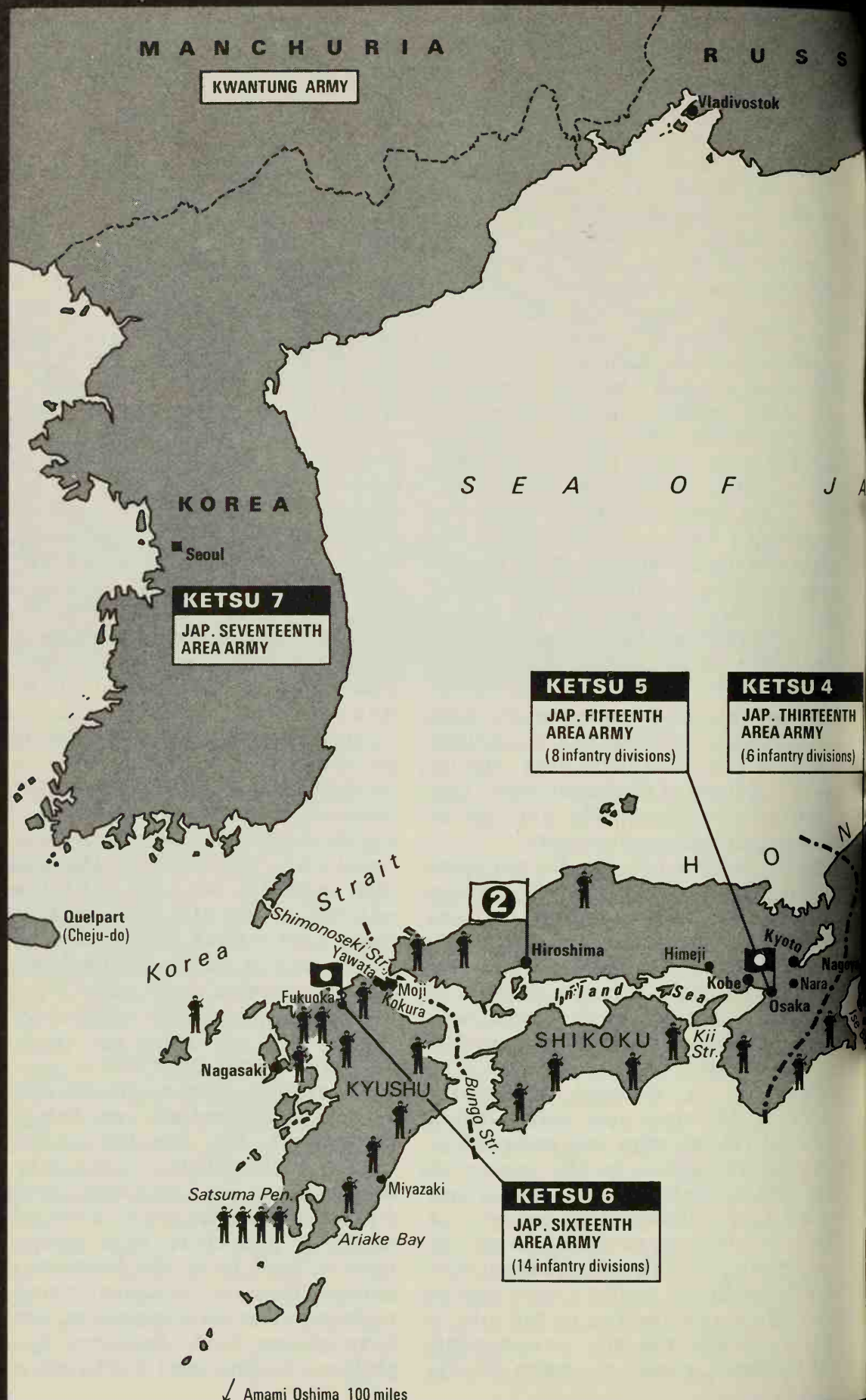
The Emperor also grew troubled by the visible credibility gap between the military's intentions and capabilities. The AGS chief had recently described defense plans for Kujukurihama beach, yet these appeared to be at considerable variance with a report submitted by the Imperial ADC after an on-the-spot inspection. Despite the army's promises, construction of defensive sites at Kujukurihama was definitely very far behind schedule, and could not be finished before the end of August. The army had also asserted that outfitting of a certain new infantry division was complete, but the monarch had learned that even small arms had not been issued. He was profoundly disturbed, said the Emperor. What would happen if Japan plunged into decisive battle under such circumstances? The best answer, honest but ominous, was articulated by the AGS planner at the army deputies' secret conference on 25th July: national strength and combat strength had been dwindling day by day; the future of the country's battle situation was black. The conduct of the war had become hopeless.

There was good reason for nervousness on the General Staff. The army was known to be suffering from qualitative weaknesses, and civil-military relations were worsening. By 1945 the authorities were obliged to scrape the bottom of the manpower barrel, inevitably sacrificing quality for quantity. Men who might ordinarily be deemed physically handicapped were now being called up. A physician who was assigned to examine inductees in the spring of 1944 told a confidant that his orders were to pass ninety-eight per cent of the men. Of some possible use on the home front, such physical dregs would be useless in the armed forces, where they could be expected to fall ill – a costly luxury for the government. The physician saw no sense to his

orders. Still, the percentages of physically fit active-duty soldiers actually called for military service (i.e., personnel mobilized in terms of fit men of conscription age) approximated fifty-one per cent in 1941, sixty per cent in 1943, and ninety per cent in 1945. By 1944 and 1945, all men in category 3B, the lowest physical category of non-exempt males, were being drafted for active duty.

The effects were visible. During an inspection of AAA units in the autumn of 1944, Prince Higashikuni was surprised and distressed to see the crippled and the one-eyed in uniform. 'IGHQ certainly has adopted a front-areas-first policy,' grumbled the prince, 'and is not thinking about defense of the homeland'. Men of the maximum draft age of forty-five found themselves serving with youngsters, after the minimum age was dropped a year in December 1944. The field realities were not unknown to AGS planners, who comprehended, by February 1945, that 'troop quality is sinking'. Staff experts were particularly disturbed by the dwindling percentage of officers who were graduates of the Imperial Military Academy in terms of all officers, from thirty-six per cent before the war, to twenty-five per cent at the end of 1944, to twelve per cent and below by mid-1945. It was also noteworthy that there were serious diminutions in the percentage of active-duty soldiers to all enlisted men, from sixty per cent before the war, to forty per cent by the end of 1944, to fifteen per cent and below by the middle of 1945.

The results of troop dilution and of general deterioration were being felt throughout the country at large. Although the military ordinarily ate better than the populace, soldiers from a unit stationed at Shimoshizu in Chiba prefecture were known to have slipped from the barracks and entered farmers' cottages during air raids or after an evacuation, and to have stolen food, unknown to the platoon leaders and company com-



MANCHURIA

R U S S

KWANTUNG ARMY

Vladivostok

KOREA

Seoul

KETSU 7

JAP. SEVENTEENTH
AREA ARMY

S E A O F J A

KETSU 5

JAP. FIFTEENTH
AREA ARMY
(8 infantry divisions)

KETSU 4

JAP. THIRTEENTH
AREA ARMY
(6 infantry divisions)

Quelpart
(Cheju-do)

Strait

Korea

Shimonoseki Str.

Yawata

Fukuoka

Moji

Kokura

Nagasaki

KYUSHU

Satsuma Pen.

Miyazaki

Ariake Bay

2

Hiroshima

Himeji

Kyoto

Nagoya

Nara

Osaka

SHIKOKU

Kobe

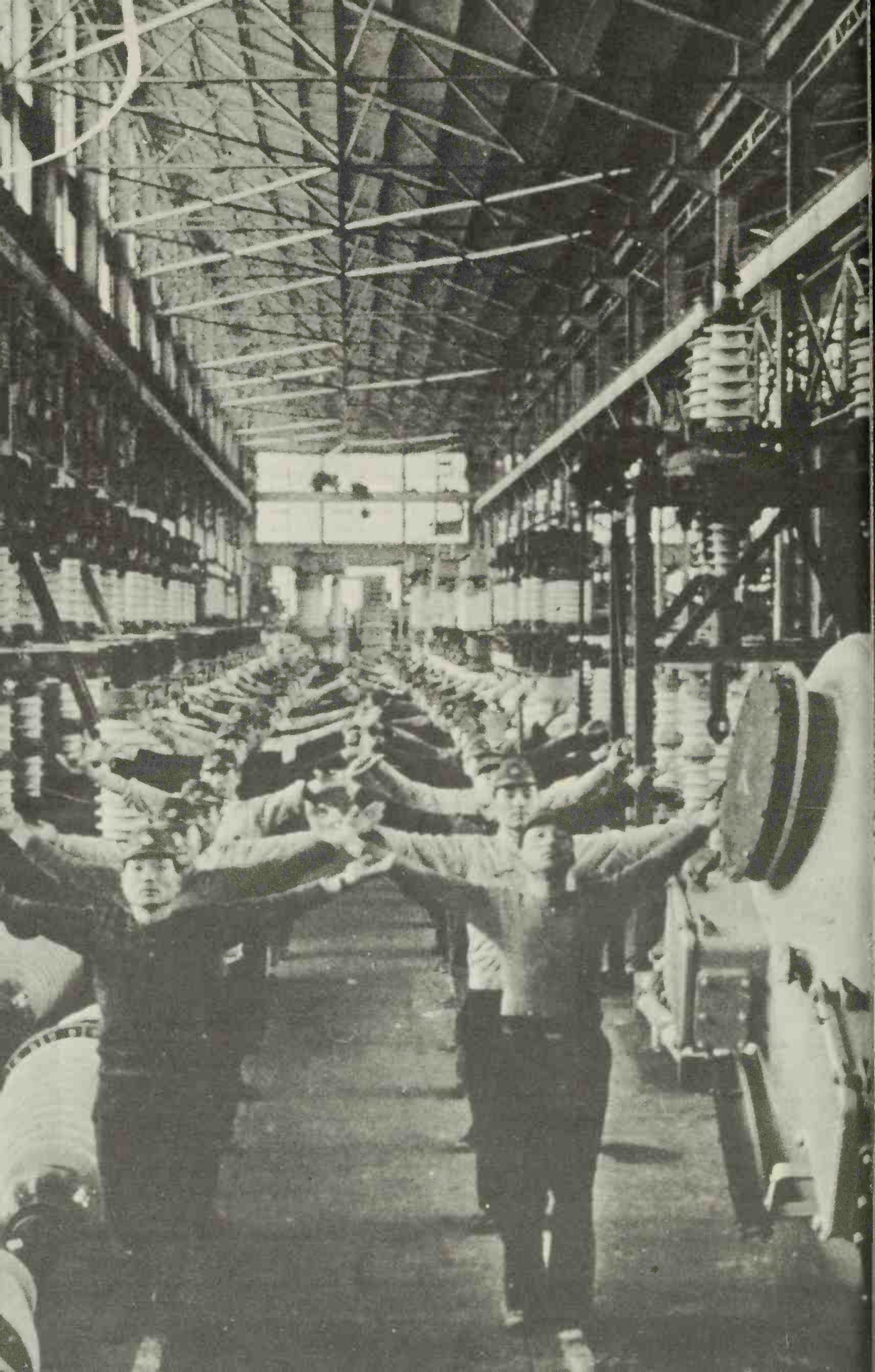
Kii Str.

KETSU 6

JAP. SIXTEENTH
AREA ARMY
(14 infantry divisions)

Amami Oshima 100 miles





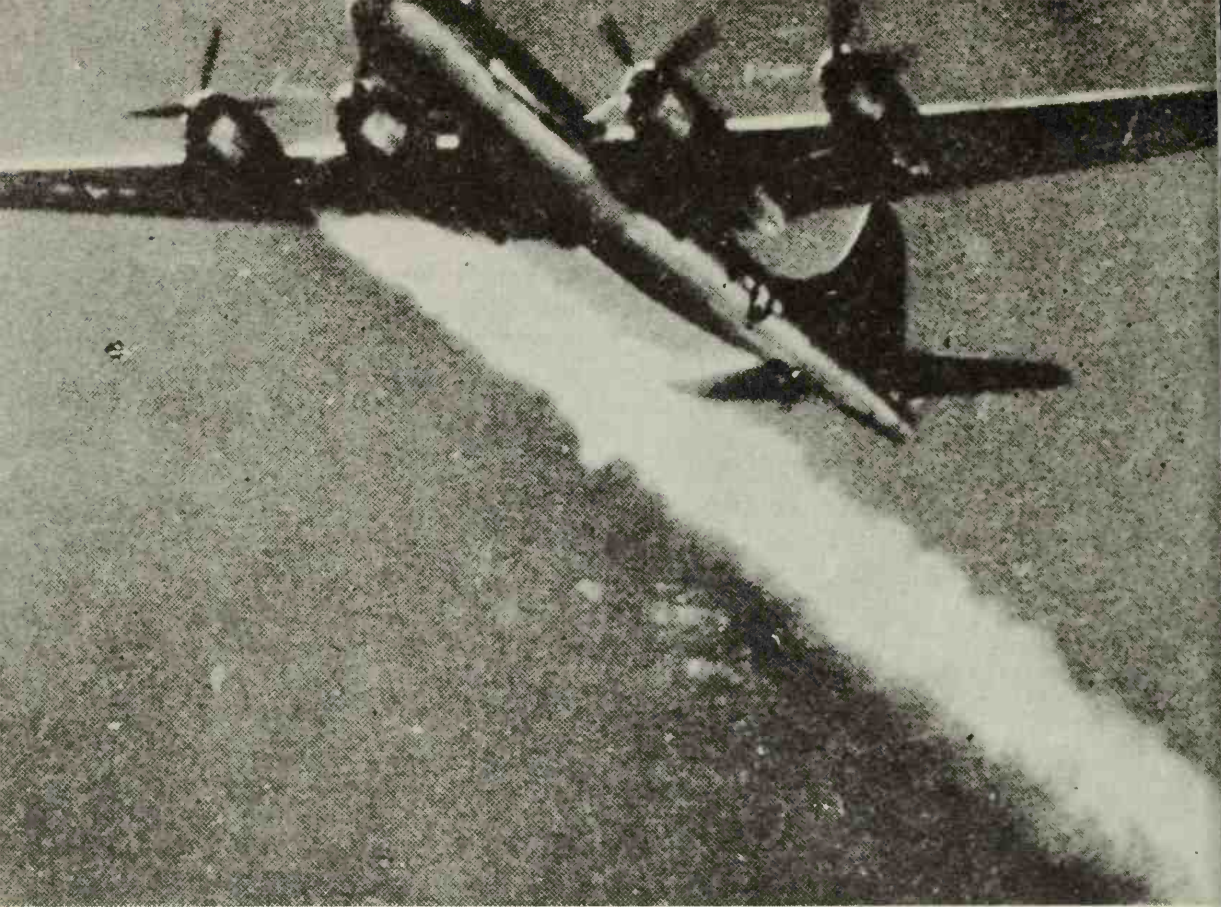
manders. Soldiers went food-hunting during unsupervised daytime duties, and universally at night. Although the number of sentries was increased, these very men would often leave their posts to go out on food forays. Even division commanders were known to schedule 'inspections' in the countryside in order to load up with vegetables and poultry. 'Inspections?' snorted local observers. 'These are nothing but market trips for the generals' wives.'

In other instances, in the Sakura area, unit staff personnel ignored the fact that soldiers stole seed potatoes for food, although the farmers desperately needed these for the next planting. A unit commander in Ibaragi seized farmlands and turned them over to his amateur soldiers for truck farming. Certain units would not or could not wait for the regular rice harvest season, and sent out eager soldiers to cut young green rice in the paddies. At Matsumoto, in Nagano prefecture, the citizenry were dunned for contributions to enable a troop unit to purchase implements for farming use. Near Fujisawa, an over-zealous platoon leader had a dozen giant pines felled for position construction, without the individual owner's permission. When the owner protested, he was berated for daring to interfere with military security. Regardless of the merits of the case and the urgency of the situation, there were many who grumbled that the army seemed to be perpetrating atrocities in the 'occupation zone' of the homeland itself. Others remarked that the military had degenerated into riffraff wearing the respected Imperial uniform. The constantly exhorted national unity between civilian and soldier was proving to be a divisiveness in practice, on the eve of decisive battle. Colonel Hayashi describes the crisis in these words: 'The worsened military circum-

stances, coupled with intensified air raids, lack of food, etc., increased the nation's distrust of the armed forces and gradually gave rise to country-wide war weariness... there was disorderliness on the part of officers and men swarming in towns and villages; the troops were especially selfish in behavior where food was concerned. These actions, which incurred severe antipathy throughout the nation, were ascribable to the decline in the quality of personnel as a result of the great increase in forces mobilized. It was, nevertheless, felt that the primary cause was hunger due to decreased food rations. The army chieftains were sorely distressed in coping with such an atmosphere.'

For the fateful struggle, by August 1945 the Japanese armed forces possessed approximately 2,350,000 officers and men under arms in the homeland, organized into fifty-three infantry divisions (apart from five divisions in Hokkaido and the northeast islands) and twenty-five brigades. In addition, there were two tank divisions and seven brigades, plus four AAA divisions. The fifty-five ground divisions were deployed as follows: Honshu - thirty-five infantry, two tank; Shikoku - four infantry; Kyushu - fourteen infantry. Behind the combat troops were 2,250,000 army workers, 1,300,000 navy workers, 250,000 special garrison force personnel, and a national volunteer force of militia officially put at 28,000,000.

The statistics, of course, do not convey an accurate picture of Japan's fundamental posture in mid-1945. Men inducted into the army in the third draft, in May, at first were obliged to continue wearing their civilian clothing and shoes. Some were issued bamboo bayonets. Rifles could be allotted only to experienced troops; the latter received them from training schools but, even so, there was only one for ten soldiers. When new rifles and machine guns were received, they went on a priority basis to the forces on Kyushu and



B-29, instrument of devastation throughout Japan

Shikoku. The First General Army on Honshu received equipment last. Meanwhile, the third-phase soldiers spent their time digging – unarmed. The planners hoped to be able to supply enough swords, battalion and regimental guns by September 1945; enough trench mortars by October; enough bayonets, rifles, grenade throwers and heavy machine guns by October or November; enough light machine guns by February 1946.

Aside from problems of concentration and *tokko* effectiveness, Japanese planners considered that time was working against them, especially in the Kanto region. Of course, training and construction measures could progress if the enemy delayed his invasion attempt until the spring of 1946, but meanwhile the air raids would intensify the devastation and the shortages of food and fuel. Public morale would be depressed and combat

operations affected indirectly. Evacuation of the populace from coastal battle zones posed another vexing problem, for many of the evacuees would be workers, whose pull-out from industry ought to be deferred as long as possible. Transportation, housing, protection, sanitation, and food problems were almost insuperable, in terms of the masses of non-combatants who would have to be moved. In the Twelfth Area Army zone alone, the population numbered almost 20,000,000. There was also fear that the Americans might attempt to deepen Japan's food crisis by razing rice fields with incendiaries on a massive scale just before harvest time.

If any one weakness undermined Japan's defensive stance by 1945, it was the problem of fuel. By late June, when the B-29 raiders had singled out refineries for destruction, stocks of crude oil were virtually exhausted, and the refineries were almost entirely shut down. The military resorted,

without notable success, to alcohol, low-grade gasoline with methanol, and water-injection systems. Even military lorries were converted to the use of charcoal gas. But synthetic oil output was negligible, and oil tanks throughout industrial complexes were running dry. Storage tanks, in fact, were torn down for scrap. After February 1945, imports of oil ceased because of Allied interdiction of shipping routes from Palembang and the south. Navy units lacked fuel to support more than two sorties by the few remaining destroyers, even in homeland waters. The last two Japanese battleships had to be moored in Kure with skeleton crews. It was decided that, because of the critical fuel shortage, warships and small craft could be used only as floating AAA or coast defense batteries at Kure and Yokosuka. Faced by a desperate need for shipping, the Japanese proceeded to lay up over 100,000 tons of oil-burning vessels in the home coastal trade early in 1945. When Prince Konoye was told privately by an army colonel in late June that the navy was mainly a ground force by now, the retired premier was shocked.

In the Japanese army and navy air corps of 1941, the average combat flyer had 500 to 600 hours of cockpit time, whereas USAAF pilots entering battle had less than half of the Japanese flying experience. As the years went by, the Japanese program of military pilot training time had had to be reduced progressively, until by the summer of 1945 Japanese pilots sometimes had less than one-hundred hours of flying experience, against a US navy and AAF average now approaching 1,000 hours. When the AGS operations bureau chief, on an inspection trip from Tokyo, observed new Japanese fighter planes en route to the Luzon battlefield, he was shocked to see that the pilots lacked the skill even to fly in formation. Fuel shortages as well as crew replacement problems caused the

Japanese to abandon routine flight training; emphasis was assigned to primary training in the piloting (essentially take-off and steering) of suicide-attack planes. Many such pilots were given only twenty to thirty hours of training.

The critical fuel shortage also affected Japanese army and navy flight test requirements of aircraft. In the first years of the war, planes were subjected to two or three hours of test flying, including five landings. By 1943, test flights were becoming short and meaningless; if a plane seemed satisfactory after thirty minutes of testing, it would be landed and accepted. In 1945, aircraft types which had been in production for some time were merely flown once or twice around the airfield; if found to be satisfactory, they were immediately accepted. New planes often received their trials while en route to the delivery depot; training aircraft underwent no trials at all. It has been generally estimated that seventy per cent of the output of new planes broke down before entering combat.

In the representative technical sphere of aviation, lack of equipment and introduction of substitute materials for vital engine parts slowed production and led to increased failures of such items as gears and crankshafts. Quality control suffered inevitably. Engineers were obliged to reduce bench-test time for new engines, which often went into production despite operating deficiencies. At the outset of the war, all aircraft engines were broken down for friction inspection and given a test run. By the summer of 1945, only one engine out of ten was withheld for such inspection. The Japanese army, which had required about seven-and-a-half hours' running-in time on engines in 1941, reduced the level to less than three hours by June 1945, while navy requirements were dropped from nine to two hours. A staff officer of the 13th Air Fleet has revealed that shortage of fuel prevented planes from



The Allies conquer in Europe: Japan stands alone

averaging more than two hours' flying time a month; this meant that a plane was only used on an average of once every three weeks. No attempt was made to keep the engines in condition by running them periodically.

Aviation fuel reserves dwindled to a point where a final sortie by all available planes could not even have been mounted. Army pilots say that oil had become more precious than blood. To conserve air strength in 1945, the High Command issued instructions that direct combat with enemy task force sweeps and bombardments must be avoided. Reconnaissance and anti-submarine flights were curtailed. Consequently, little resistance, in general, was being put up against Allied carrier planes, bombers, and warships that were hammering the homeland. For example, in February 1945 an esti-

mated 1,400 US carrier planes struck at the Kanto-Tokai districts during one sweep. A Japanese staff officer despaired at the lack of interference on the part of the defenses. Yet next month the 5th Air Fleet commander in Kyushu, Vice-Admiral Ugaki, was instructed to attack a huge approaching task force only if it contained invasion transports; if the force was made up only of warships, he was to refrain from striking. After pleading with the High Command for special permission to attack, regardless of the composition of the hostile task force, Ugaki was allowed to use his own judgement.

By July 1945, Allied warships dared to penetrate Hokkaido waters and conduct surface bombardment of targets at Muroran bay, Kamaishi, and Hakodate. War Minister Anami apologized formally to local military commanders who met in Tokyo on 16th July 1945, for 'allowing enemy task forces to dominate the area around the homeland'. IGHQ was

obliged to relax its hitherto strict policy of conserving aircraft and to release eleven fighter regiments to the air defense army; but since the units were deployed thinly, quick concentration was difficult, and bases were interdicted by the enemy, the Japanese defenses remained relatively ineffective. There was also a chronic shortage of AA guns and ammunition because of the decline in munitions production. Available AA guns proved ineffective against night attacks by planes striking at high altitude. The growing ineffectiveness of the air-defense system caused very real fear, on the part of the government, that portions of the homeland might soon be isolated from the remainder, as the result of intensive enemy raids against the transportation network.

For a have-not country such as Japan, government economic experts judged that the raw-material - and hence production - situation would become unacceptable after 1944. Munitions output was less than half the wartime peak, a level that could not be expected to support sustained defensive operations against a sea-borne invasion. In February 1945, an AGS officer wrote privately that, judging from the trifling amounts of steel upon which the army could rely, 'one can now see clearly that we cannot expect much in the way of materiel, although the decisive battle for the homeland is being demanded of us'. Added the colonel: 'Military preparations in the home islands are to expand on a record-breaking scale. The quality of the soldiery must decline; what about the equipment they require?' Shortages were felt in all sectors of the economy, not only oil but also transport, aircraft, coal, steel, nonferrous metals, etc. The manufacturers reported they could provide only fifteen to forty per cent of the total suicide boat force projected for the end of September 1945. Airplane engine manufacturers could never equal the output of airframes, which themselves were afflicted by

poor construction and unacceptable levels of interchangeability. Ordnance output by the end of July 1945 was behind schedule in every important category. The percentage of actual production norms achieved amounted to the following: rifles sixty-eight per cent; light machine guns sixty-three; machine guns, ninety; infantry cannon fourteen; AA guns fifty-three; mortars nine; self-propelled guns twenty-one; light artillery thirty-seven; heavy artillery fifty-four. These low levels of weapons production inevitably frustrated the capability to equip new units or to build the necessary levels in supply dumps. Increasingly, it came to be felt that only one battle, the battle for Kyushu, could ever be waged against the anticipated invaders.

Publicly, however, the Japanese populace was given no respite from fire-eating prescriptions. In January 1945, the military authorities sought to inflame the people by getting the domestic press to report that the 'monstrous' enemy had bombed the holy shrines of Ise. Three months later, Kantaro Suzuki entered upon his term as premier by 'patriotically promising that he would give his all to the state and would himself take up a stand in the foremost line of her defenders'. General Umezu, the chief of AGS, prepared an article for army officers, in mid-1945, on the subject of the general decisive battle. The way to certain victory, stressed Umezu, lay in 'making everything on Imperial soil contribute to the war effort, and in combining the total fighting strength of the nation, both material and spiritual, to annihilate the invading American forces. In particular, the establishment of a metaphysical spirit for waging the decisive battle is the first rule. What should be remembered above all in carrying out the general decisive battle is adherence to a vigorous spirit of attack'. In this vein, a last-minute war ministry statement called upon the Japanese army to fight through the

'holy war' to defend the national polity, even though there might be nothing to eat except grass and dirt, and no place to sleep but the open fields. Eternal life was to be sought in death; 'a resolute fight will surely reveal a way out of a desperate situation.'

Defense plans continued to be characterized by the idea of mass use of special-attack tactics on the part of regulars and guerrillas; by an emphasis upon aggressive beachline defense; and by the engagement of all able-bodied men and women in a national resistance program. A former military attaché who once served in the United States exhorted army personnel to risk their lives and 'slay several enemy soldiers with one,' thus breaking the foe's will to fight. 'American troops,' this officer claimed, 'tend to launch bold and reckless headlong rushes when the military situation develops somewhat badly for them. That is the very best time to deal them a violent blow, by means of surprise attack.' Defense action against tanks, and especially flame-throwing tanks, stressed close combat - 'one soldier, one tank'. Materiel was primitive: hand-thrown explosives, handle charges, Molotov cocktails, and fuzed depth charges in sacks to be hooked onto armored vehicles. At worst, a soldier should strap charges to his back and explode himself by dashing between the treads.

All the while, the leaders were publicly calling upon the general public for a struggle of flesh against iron, of spirit against materiel, in the Japanese tradition which, historically, despised surrender. The Diet passed a 'volunteer military service' law affecting boys of fifteen and men of sixty, girls of seventeen and women of forty. But, regarding the much-publicized issue of the bamboo spears, a staff planner reminds us that it was fundamentally a psychological con-

ditioning device to inculcate national willingness to fight and to die. This officer, interestingly, cites Churchill's beachhead exhortations of 1940 as an example of 'bamboo spear psychology'. In April 1945, the army issued a graphically illustrated '*People's Handbook of Combat Resistance*,' whose cover showed a Japanese about to knife the throat of a prostrate enemy soldier. A wealth of simple tips were provided: 'The safety pin must be removed from Molotov cocktails, which should be hurled so that the side of the bottle impacted against vehicles. In aiming against descending enemy parachutists allow two-and-a-



Civilians queue for their weekly food distribution in Tokyo

half lengths. When engaging tall Yankees, do not swing swords or spears sideways or straight down; thrust straight into their guts. Attack from behind employing hatchets, sickles, hooks, or cleavers. In *karate* or *judo* assaults, smash the Yankee in the pit of his stomach or kick him in the testicles.'

Summing up the Japanese military outlook in the summer of 1945, Lieutenant-Colonel Iwaichi Fujiwara, an intelligence and operations specialist, remarked that, 'Relying for the most part on the suicidal bravery, ardent patriotism and fierce loyalty of the people, Japan prepared to wage

the final decisive battle against an enemy far superior in both technical resources and manpower . . . In spite of the odds building up against them, the Japanese people well knew that if their leaders were determined to carry out the decisive battle on the sacred soil of the homeland, there was no alternative but to fight to the bitter end'. Admits a staff officer who served at IGHQ between May and August 1945: 'We merely prepared for the final operations with the philosophy that we must fight in order to glorify our national and military traditions, that it was an engagement which transcended victory or defeat.'



How to be defeated 'gracefully'?

At a Navy General Staff conference held in late June 1944, an Imperial prince reportedly remarked that, since the New Guinea-Ogasawara defense line had been broken by the enemy, perhaps the war objectives now ought to be: 'How to be defeated gracefully?' Soon afterward, Colonel Matsutani, Chief of the War Direction sub-section of the AGS, and two of his subordinates drafted a study which concluded, among other matters, that Japan retained no further hope of restoring her declining fortunes operationally. It would therefore appear wisest to plan to end the war quickly. On 2nd July, Matsutani frankly told General Tojo that the country must seek to get out of the war as soon as Germany fell. The only courses of negotiation were a compromise peace - or capitulation. At worst, the minimum terms must be preservation of the national polity. Matsutani also briefed the NGS, and derived the impression that high naval circles as well as the senior statesmen

were pessimistic about the war's outcome and desirous of a compromise settlement.

The day after Matsutani briefed Tojo, he was ordered to be transferred to the China front, at Tojo's direct instruction. Nevertheless, at this very time in mid-1944 Konoye and the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Kido, were already discussing the possibility of peace overtures to Great Britain, the abdication of the Emperor and a regency by Prince Takamatsu in Crown Prince Akihito's minority. There is also evidence that, in early 1945, sources close to the throne were thinking that the sovereign ought to contemplate retirement to a temple to pray for the repose of the war dead.

Just before Tojo's fall on 18th July 1944, senior statesmen, centering on Konoye, secretly considered ending the war by ascribing all the blame for defeat upon Tojo himself. Marshal Terauchi was to be brought back from the south to control the military, and Prince Higashikuni or Prince Taka-

matsu would assume the premiership. An Imperial edict would terminate the war; the immediate ceasefire was designed solely to protect the national polity (sometimes termed the national identity), whose interests transcended the problem of unconditional surrender, Konoye felt. It is significant that such thinking existed at very high levels, thirteen months before the actual capitulation.

The Japanese military, of course, was fiercely anxious to thwart public or private advocacy of peace views, and even prevented elders' consultation with the monarch. It was said that Tojo was urging constantly that even Konoye, his predecessor as prime minister, be kept under close surveillance. 'I hope there are no military police about,' was the first thing Konoye said to Shigeru Yoshida when he visited the latter's house in the spring of 1945. Many of Konoye's most important private conferences were conducted at roundabout rendezvous, and the prince is known to have entrusted important personal papers for safeguarding by secretaries. It would be misleading to think that only the high-born and the 'peace-mongers' suffered from the attentions of the military police or the thought-control agents. To cite but one of innumerable instances: at the end of December 1944, on a passenger train, a mere housewife told another, 'The American guests (the B-29s) may come tonight'. She was knocked senseless by a *gendarme* who had overheard her.

The first substantial evidence that the highest army leaders were at last willing to consider a negotiated peace is to be found in Marshal Sugiyama's remarks - optimistic at best, foolish at worst - during a policy conference on 5th September 1944. He thought that Germany and Russia, both exhausted, might be induced to make peace, especially if Japan threatened to attack the USSR from the rear. The Chungking regime was in difficulty, and Japan might arrange peace with China if Chiang Kai-shek were allowed

to combine with the Nanking (collaborationist) government. It was also possible, argued Sugiyama, to talk peace with Britain, which possessed huge interests in the Far East and many friends in Japan.

By January 1945, after the unexpected defeat at Leyte, the Emperor could no longer bear the wall of obfuscation and secrecy that surrounded him. To the Lord Keeper, His Majesty intimated that he would like to hear from the elder statesmen, the ex-premiers, for the first time during the war. Kido feared that the covert peace movement would be wrecked by the army if he (and consequently the monarch) were linked openly with the 'doves'. Eventually, it was arranged for the elders to visit the palace separately in February, on the pretext of inquiring after the Imperial health. Baron Hiranuma, on the 7th, spoke in abstractions about the need for concentrated war measures and for government officials' benevolence. The senior diplomat Hirota saw signs of American resolve to end the war in Europe and in Asia vigorously and soon, in the fact that Roosevelt had selected Stettinius and Grew for key positions. The core of Hirota's remarks centered on the matter of the USSR, as potential mediator or dread-
ed foe.

On 14th February, Konoye visited the Emperor and pressed openly for peace. 'I believe,' began the prince in an eight-page report, 'that our defeat in war is imminent and inevitable, regrettable though it is'. From the standpoint of preserving the national structure, Konoye argued for the conclusion of hostilities at the earliest possible moment. The prince made the apt comment that the militarists had 'in their hearts lost self-confidence to continue the war, but they will probably resist to the death in order to save face'. Konoye respectfully appealed to the Emperor for 'extraordinarily bold decision'. Otherwise, if the war continued, a communist revolution would surely erupt within

Japan, instigated by young army officers who foolishly believed that communism and the national polity could coexist. A number of bureaucrats and civilians were closely associated with the reformist officers, some of whom dared to advocate direct cooperation with the USSR and even the Chinese communists. The conspiracy would only be facilitated by the confusion of the fatal 'decisive battle'; an early purge was therefore imperative.

During the question period, the Emperor asked about the apparent contradiction between the Army Chief of Staff's view, that the Americans were thinking of effecting major change in the national polity, and Konoye's opposite statement. The prince replied that the military was resorting to belligerent phraseology in order to stimulate national fighting spirit. He believed that Under Secretary of State Grew was too respectful and understanding to harbor intentions which were hostile to the Imperial institution. Predictions were difficult, however, especially in wartime, as America was a country guided by public opinion. In fact, this was another reason to end the war now.

The Emperor then pressed Konoye about the matter of a purge and of purgees, but the prince evaded a direct reply. Eventually pinned down, Konoye mentioned possibilities of suitable 'anti-main-stream' generals such as Ugaki, Kozuki, Mazaki, Binshiro, Obata, and Ishiwara. Given the wartime circumstances, Anami or Yamashita might be even better for rebuilding the military. To this, the Emperor commented that it would all be rather difficult unless some victory intervened. Konoye replied that it would indeed be gratifying if such combat results could be accomplished, but that time was of the essence. Peace in a half year or a year would be too late.

Ancient Baron Wakatsuki was later received in audience on the 19th, Count Makino the same day, Admiral

Okada on the 23rd, and Tojo on the 26th. Okada's presentation was particularly interesting, for it stressed Japan's scientific and technological lag. But none of the elders, and certainly not fire-eating Tojo, was as emphatic or direct regarding peace as Konoye. In fact, soon afterward, Yoshida (a former ambassador to Great Britain) was arrested by the military police for his known role in assisting Konoye with the memorial to the Throne. Additionally, Yoshida was charged with having written to another distinguished personage that 'the army has lost confidence in carrying out the war, and there is no disguising the fact that morale is low. I think that defeat is unavoidable.'

By 16th March 1945, Iwo Jima, the 'main entrance to the homeland,' was entirely in American hands. Two weeks later, Okinawa was invaded. Ineffective General Koiso, after stumbling along since he and Yonai had replaced Tojo in July 1944, decided to resign as prime minister. Koiso, a retired officer, had been denied access to operational and intelligence data by the military, and had had no success in seeking to combine the post of war minister with that of premier, because of the army's opposition. He had also botched clandestine peace negotiations with free-lance Miao Ping, a supposed emissary of the Chinese Nationalists. On 5th April, Koiso stepped down, without notice, but with the recommendation to the throne that the succeeding government be a powerful 'IGHQ cabinet'.

The day after Koiso resigned, the Soviet government gave one year's notice of its intention to denounce the five-year Russo-Japanese neutrality pact signed in April 1941. The reason given was that Japan was assisting Russia's enemy, Germany, and fighting Russia's allies, America and Britain, a situation quite different from that of four years before. Despite the allegation in most publications that Ambassador Naotake Sato was called in by Vyacheslav Molotov to be



Funeral rites for a dead soldier

given the news orally, Sato denies it. He says he was bypassed insultingly: a note was merely sent over to the Japanese embassy. Molotov continued to avoid seeing Sato; when he finally did, on the 27th, Molotov tried to evade any commitment about the remaining year of legal validity attached to the neutrality treaty. The most that the ambassador could extract was a very, very reluctant 'Yes'. Meanwhile, since early 1945, the Kwantung Army was reporting significant Soviet troop movements eastward to Siberia.

Despite these hammerblows in succession, and the fact that Nazi Germany was on its last legs, the Japanese military still spoke of fighting on. 'The prospects cannot be called good,' General Umezu admitted to Kido, 'but we must go on, prepared to fight to the last. If morale is high and we concentrate all of our strength, matters are not impossible, although certainly not easy'. None of the

service chiefs favored Koiso's idea of an IGHQ cabinet, primarily because the concept ran counter to the constitutional set-up, they said.

For Koiso's successor at this critical juncture, the elder statesmen agreed upon a number of prerequisites. The new premier must be oriented toward an early peace but he must not possess political strings from the past. He should be a general or admiral, active or retired, who outwardly was resolved to go on with the war. The Emperor and the public must have full faith in him. Outgoing War Minister Sugiyama recommended the chief of AGS. Umezu, but Kido's choice was retired old Admiral Kantaro Suzuki, president of the privy council. One source of relief to Kido was the fact the army would provide an intelligent and popular war minister in General Anami, who had once served as Imperial aide de camp for four years.

Unknown to elders Hirota, Tojo, and Suzuki himself, the five other senior statesmen (Kido, Konoye, Okada, Hiranuma, and Wakatsuki) had reached agreement on Suzuki several weeks earlier. Now, at the decisive meeting on 5th April, Hiranuma recommended Wakatsuki, Suzuki recommended Konoye, Hiranuma then recommended Suzuki, but Tojo recommended Marshal Hata. Kido thereupon gracefully endorsed the suggestion that Suzuki became premier, although Tojo angrily warned that the army might not agree – a statement which infuriated some of his colleagues and led to hot exchanges. Kido deftly intimated that it was the people who might not cooperate with the army. In any case, a sincerely reluctant Suzuki became the elders' choice. His was intended to be the last wartime cabinet, although the 'doves' dared not mention the word 'peace,' because Tojo was present and Konoye was notoriously loose-lipped.

Suzuki remained respectfully reluctant even when he appeared before the Emperor. He was seventy-nine years old, hard of hearing, and a simple, non-political sailor. The monarch smiled and asked Suzuki to consent; at such a critical juncture, he was the only man for the premiership. Loyal Suzuki accepted with trepidation. He would do his best to carry out the Imperial wishes. But, one wondered, did this encompass suit for peace? The Emperor, who had known Suzuki since his days as grand chamberlain, had said nothing specific about the basic policy to be pursued by the new cabinet. In persuading Suzuki to accept, Kido had hinted at ending the war, by phraseology that 'a very important matter must be conducted'. The admiral said he understood clearly. But was he thinking of making peace or waging a decisive struggle to the death as the 'very important matter'? Even Kido is not entirely sure, but his original impression was that Suzuki understood the Emperor's intention to mean peace; Kido retains

that conviction, given the ultimate outcome of 1945. Suzuki later asserted vaguely that he had been 'given to understand' that the Emperor wanted him to strive to bring the war to a conclusion (that is, to make peace) as speedily as possible. Intimates suggest the probability that even Suzuki did not fully comprehend the deterioration in Japan's military posture or the extent of the attrition in war potential at the time he took office. The chief cabinet secretary, Sakomizu, remains irked at the British journalist who claims that 'to those elements around the Emperor who saw hope for Japan's survival only in a swift end to hostilities, it became hourly more evident that in choosing Suzuki to stamp out the fire they had picked a man who just liked spreading sparks'. Not so, insists Sakomizu; it was just that Suzuki was a 'true Oriental' in his modes of thinking. For example, around June, the premier inked for Sakomizu a Chinese saying whose gist was that, in cooking a small fish, excessive stirring or haste would destroy the shape; it was the same in ruling a country. Kase calls Suzuki's character 'unique'.

Part of the confusion in understanding the old admiral stemmed from general semantic obfuscation. During the last climacteric of the war, at a conference on 13th June, Kido told Suzuki that Navy Minister Yonai had commented: 'The premier still appears to be very positive (about continuing the war)'. Suzuki laughed and remarked, 'I thought that Yonai was still very positive. Can I be mistaken about this?' Observed Kido, 'So by chance I learned that these two men were thinking along the same lines'.

Another source of confusion was provided by deliberately manipulated 'stage acting' (*haragei*) designed to exert certain desired psychological effects. So deft were the performances on occasion, and so subtle the manifestations, that even Japanese associates were taken in by the principals.

Haragei has been called 'the art of the hidden and invisible technique - the wary and prudent approach'. Both Premier Suzuki and War Minister Anami were consummate actors, in public and toward each other. Suzuki himself often resorted to ambiguous historical or literary allegories, with much reliance on extrasensory thought-transference. He later wrote that he sensed the Emperor's innermost feelings but had to conceal matters deep within himself, without the relief of sharing them. Suzuki was too ruggedly honest to have been a hypocrite in the Western meaning of the word.

Suzuki's first problem as premier was to win the cooperation of the army. On the night of 6th April, the *gendarmierie* commander had warned Marshal Sugiyama that the Suzuki cabinet might be another Badoglio government and therefore ought to be blocked (i.e., by the withholding of a war minister). Although Sugiyama and his associates may have dismissed this appreciation as one based upon rumor, they were worried. Suzuki made a good impression by taking the initiative and coming personally to the war ministry, but he was presented with three written conditions prepared by the war minister, the chief of staff, and the inspector-general:

1. The war must be carried on to the last.
2. The army and the navy must be unified.
3. All measures planned by the army, in order to achieve certain victory in the decisive battle for the homeland, must be conducted concretely and without hesitation.

Suzuki glanced at the three conditions and accepted them without fuss. 'I shall try to satisfy your wishes,' he promised. Thereupon Sugiyama formally recommended Anami as war minister, a choice welcomed by the premier.

For navy minister, Suzuki prevailed upon Yonai to remain, although there was some mild army opposition, and

Yonai himself had preferred to resign because he had been deputy premier in the unsuccessful Koiso cabinet.

The new premier's other very important problem was to appoint a skilful foreign minister who would be attuned to his policies, whatever they were. Koiso did not endorse Kido's suggestion that Shigemitsu stay on. Hirota, in turn, declined to serve, and recommended Shigenori Togo. Suzuki then asked the latter to resume the post he had resigned in 1942. But when Togo asked for a straightforward opinion on the taboo subject of the prospects of hostilities, Suzuki answered, 'I think we can carry on the war for another two or three years'. Togo thereupon declined to serve unless the premier reconsidered his views. Pressure was put upon Togo, by a number of officials, to 'save' Japan by accepting. Sakomizu, for one, insisted unconvincingly that Suzuki simply could not speak openly for peace, for fear of undesirable repercussions. 'I should, he thought, read the premier's real intention'. Kido's chief secretary added that Suzuki's views were probably not unalterable; Togo could correct them by entering into the cabinet. 'Anyway,' said the secretary, 'I believe that you needn't worry too much, because it seems the Emperor is considering the ending of the war'. Togo eventually saw Suzuki again and was now told, 'So far as the prospect of the war is concerned, your opinion is quite satisfactory to me. As for diplomacy, you shall have a free hand'. Togo then accepted the post of foreign minister. Suzuki had been acting in the post, concurrently, when the cabinet was installed on 7th April. Now, with Togo's entry as foreign minister, the lineup was complete, as of the 9th.

Suzuki began his premiership with a bang. In a radio address on the evening of 8th April, he told the nation: 'I, who am eighty years old, have tried all my life to serve the cause of the country. Having, however, so far taken no active part in politics, I



Prince Konoye

consider myself utterly unfit for the office of prime minister. It is only because of the grave situation that I have accepted the Imperial command. Now I stand at the head of the gallant nation, confident that though I fall at this my last post of service, all you people, a hundred million strong, will march forward over my lifeless body to overcome the unprecedented crisis that confronts our fatherland'. 'Bombastic ignorance!' sputters a foreign critic. But Suzuki himself insisted later that he really meant he was determined to end the war at the first opportunity and even at the risk of assassination. 'I had always been thinking that the fall of Japan was evident if the war was conducted the way it was . . . Would it be possible for the everlasting soul of the country to live eternally even after the state died . . .?' Despite these covert thoughts, Kase admits that Suzuki's speech was 'rather unfortunate,' in that it disappointed the enemy powers who thought they discerned, in the advent of the new premier, some evidence of the painful emergence of peace elements. Suzuki's broadcast exhorted the people to fight to the

last; it did not even hint at any desire to seek peace. In this respect, Suzuki was either playing it safe because of the presence of the dominant war faction; or, quite possibly, he still did not comprehend the urgency of the situation or the concrete nature of his commission. Sakomizu had had some doubts about the speech before it was read but, when Suzuki perused the final draft prepared for him, he said, 'It sounds fine to me'.

Following the Soviet denunciation of the neutrality pact, it became all the more important to deal the Allies a major blow at Okinawa, in order to improve Japan's deteriorating position. But the last Japanese counter-offensive failed in early May, and the key island was doomed. Of ultimately greater importance for Japan was the death of Hitler and the capitulation of Germany on 8th May. Now Japan alone would have to withstand the full fury of the Western Allies. But would this not have been the best time for Japan to extricate herself from her tragic destiny, by disclaiming the useless ties to the Third Reich? The agriculture minister, who knew Japan's hopeless food situation better than most, said as much to several colleagues. They replied that peace was still out of the question, or at least it was not the time to speak of it. Still, Togo (whose hair grew grayer at this time) tried his best. Believing that air power had doomed Germany as it was now dooming Japan, he advised the Emperor on 21st April that now was the time seriously to explore an ending of the war. The monarch said he wanted the war to end soon - words which heartened Togo immeasurably.

For Japan, at this stage, 'unconditional surrender' was the stumbling block posed by the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and China. Direct negotiation for peace with terms seemed hopeless. Dealing through Sweden, Switzerland, China, or the Vatican appeared unpromising. Togo did not even know till two days

after he took office that Bagge, the Swedish ambassador in Tokyo, had talked with Shigemitsu, his predecessor, about the feasibility of sounding out the United States regarding peace terms. Although Togo was sympathetic, he boggled over Japanese rather than Swedish initiative. The truth was that Togo (and Kido) held out hopes of intermediation by the USSR, partly because he himself had dealt effectively with the Russians when he was ambassador in Moscow in 1939 at the time of the very serious Russo-Japanese border warfare at Nomonhan, partly because the Japanese army seemed to be willing to consider a negotiated peace arranged through Soviet good offices.

General Anami suggested in mid-May that Soviet and American policies were bound to conflict after the war, and therefore Moscow would not want to see Japan destroyed. The USSR, in fact, ought to be thankful for Japan's restraint against Siberia throughout the Second World War – a restraint which helped the Soviet Union to defeat the Germans. Japanese abrogation of formal ties with the Nazis might be expected to help now too. Still, there could be few illusions about Russian benevolence toward an anchor country of the old anti-Comintern pact. Japan must operate from some position of strength, however slight, and must be ready to offer very handsome compensation. While the Japanese army would have settled for Russian quiescence in the Far East, the desperate navy went so far as to hope to be able to barter cruisers for oil and aircraft from a friendly USSR. Premier Suzuki thought he detected elements of fairness in Stalin's make-up and suggested that Soviet 'brokerage' be sought. Even Togo had to agree that the only hope of securing terms from the Allies would have to be via the still-neutral great power Russia; his own thinking was geared to peace, not to tactical advantages wanted by the armed forces.

There were some tentative, painful

discussions by the supreme council, during meetings between 11th-14th May, about plums to be dangled before the USSR: abrogation of the Portsmouth Treaty provisions of 1905, general restoration of the situation before the Russo-Japanese war, neutralization of South Manchuria. Even the northern Kuriles might have to be relinquished for the benefit of a general settlement. But terms with the United States and Britain could not be resolved. Anami argued that the basis should be Japan's currently 'favorable' stance: still undefeated, the country possessed far more territory of the foe than vice versa. Togo disagreed: one dared not ignore the prospects of the war. Interestingly, Suzuki told neither the cabinet nor the Throne about the delicate decisions reached by the council, either because the premier thought the timing was premature or the whole matter would come to naught. Some suggest, unconvincingly, that he simply forgot.

Meanwhile, the Suzuki government openly breathed fire, though Hitler's Germany was no more. The supreme war council, on 30th April, agreed formally to continue hostilities. On 3rd May, Suzuki told the country that events in Europe were not unexpected and that 'we Japanese must renew our determination'. Japan's self-existence was at stake. Three days later, Togo asserted publicly that 'whatever the attitude of Germany, it will have no effect on Japan's resolve to prosecute the war successfully against the USA and Great Britain'.

Behind the scenes, in early June, Hirota – a former premier, foreign minister, and ambassador to the USSR – informally sounded out Soviet Ambassador Malik in secret at Hakone spa about improving the two countries' relations. The mood was cordial, and Malik merely asked for time to study the proposal. Largely because of the relatively high hopes pinned on the Soviet channel, the Japanese army, navy, and foreign office stopped

or failed to encourage promising contacts with the Allies via Stockholm and Berne. In Tokyo, at the end of May, State Minister Shimomura warned the premier and IGHQ that Japan ought not to put all of her eggs in one basket; direct negotiations with America and Britain should be attempted. Nobody objected but nothing was done. Anami and Yonai got into a protracted argument about the prospects of the war, the former exuding optimism, the latter pessimism. The tough army line was reaffirmed by the supreme council on 6th June and by the rubber-stamp Imperial conference of the 8th. Togo's objections were shunted aside; he later chided Admiral Yonai for his inaction. Privy Council President Hiranuma went so far as to suggest that any mention of peace be strictly prohibited. Suzuki seemed unexcited; perhaps he viewed the policy statements as merely academic, under the circumstances, or else he put national unity above all else, for he had dared to admit that the hope of success was 'desperately slim'. It is also illuminating that the premier included the following remarks in the speech he made to the special session of the Diet on 9th June:

'Once in 1918 I navigated to the western coast of the United States as commander of the training squadron. When I was invited to a welcome reception at San Francisco I delivered an address concerning a war between Japan and the United States . . . I stated that the Japanese are no lovers of war but a people that love peace . . . Then I said that there was no cause for a war between the two countries, and that if there ever were a war, it would be much prolonged and would invite a very foolish result. I said that the Pacific Ocean is a blessing given by Heaven for the intercourse of Japan and the United States, and if the ocean were ever used for transporting troops *both countries would receive punishment from heaven*. But twenty years later unfortunately the

two countries came to war. It is most regrettable.'

For a while there was no particularly adverse reaction in the Diet, which was attracted by Suzuki's otherwise very bellicose address. But a perceptive interpellator soon detected the italicized passage and launched a violent attack upon the premier, almost causing the collapse of the cabinet. It is worth remembering, however, that the old admiral had personally re-inserted the troublesome phraseology after his aides had inked it out in the draft, and that Anami did not support the oust-Suzuki clamor.

Another internal crisis occurred in June, when Navy Minister Yonai indicated that he wished to resign. Ostensibly, he was displeased with the uselessness of the special Diet session; but, at heart, he was bitterly disappointed with Suzuki's apparent lack of seriousness about ending the war or his ability to do so. Togo heartened Yonai by promising to expedite peace probes via the USSR. Kido also showed the navy minister a draft of his own plan to save the situation, whereupon Yonai agreed to stay on, thereby saving the cabinet from further difficulty.

Kido had concluded that Okinawa was doomed and that Japan's capability to fight on would be almost exhausted by year's end. The enemy's fierce aerial offensive would reach all-out proportions, causing dangerous if not uncontrollable unrest among the populace. Resolute action was needed to end the war now; if Japan waited too long, she would meet the same fate as Germany and would fail to accomplish the supreme objectives of protecting the Imperial institution and the national polity. Kido then made the revolutionary suggestion that the Emperor issue a personal letter, borne by an Imperial envoy, to a mediating power. The terms of peace might, inevitably, be harsh, but they must be honorable.

After preliminary coordination with

secret 'doves' close to Togo and Suzuki, Kido saw the Emperor on 9th June. Unhappy with the war direction authorities' tough stance, which was contradicted by confidential reports from the army (about the forces in Manchuria) and from the navy (about the capability with regard to special-attack motorboats), the Emperor expressed profound satisfaction with Kido's draft, and urged the Lord Keeper to proceed promptly. Kido accordingly conferred individually with Suzuki, Yonai, Togo, and Anami. The last-named was still talking about the decisive battle for the homeland but agreed with Kido's basic intention. Anami, for all of his public belligerence, was both patriot and realist. The military secretary to Suzuki, Colonel Matsutani - a 'dove', heard Anami say that the Japanese might be able to smash one-third of the enemy's first-wave landing force but could not annihilate the foe.

That the Emperor was known to have looked favorably upon the Kido plan helped to move it through the coordinating levels. At a meeting of the supreme war direction council on 18th June, all agreed that Japan must fight on, since the United States and England demanded unconditional surrender, but that peace negotiations through a third power were desirable, on the basis of maintenance of the national identity. It was hoped that hostilities could be ended by September. On 22nd June, at Kido's suggestion, the Big Six (premier, foreign minister, war and navy ministers, chiefs of AGS and NGS) met in the presence of the Monarch, who said he wanted efforts made to bring about peace promptly. He took his auditors by surprise when he then asked for opinions. Suzuki, significantly, asked Yonai, of the silent group, to reply. Umezu stressed the need for circumspection, whereupon the Emperor stressed the need for speed too. Anami held his peace, as did the NGS chief, Toyoda. One Japanese historian asserts that the Emperor's 'definite

expression of his desires at the meeting . . . was Japan's first step toward peace. The government's attitude toward the termination of the war, obscure till now, was set'. Suzuki reportedly told Sakomizu that he was deeply grateful because the sovereign 'had said today what (the premier) and others dared not say, although they had wanted badly to voice the same thoughts'. In other words, Suzuki had at last gained confidence to try to end the war in earnest.

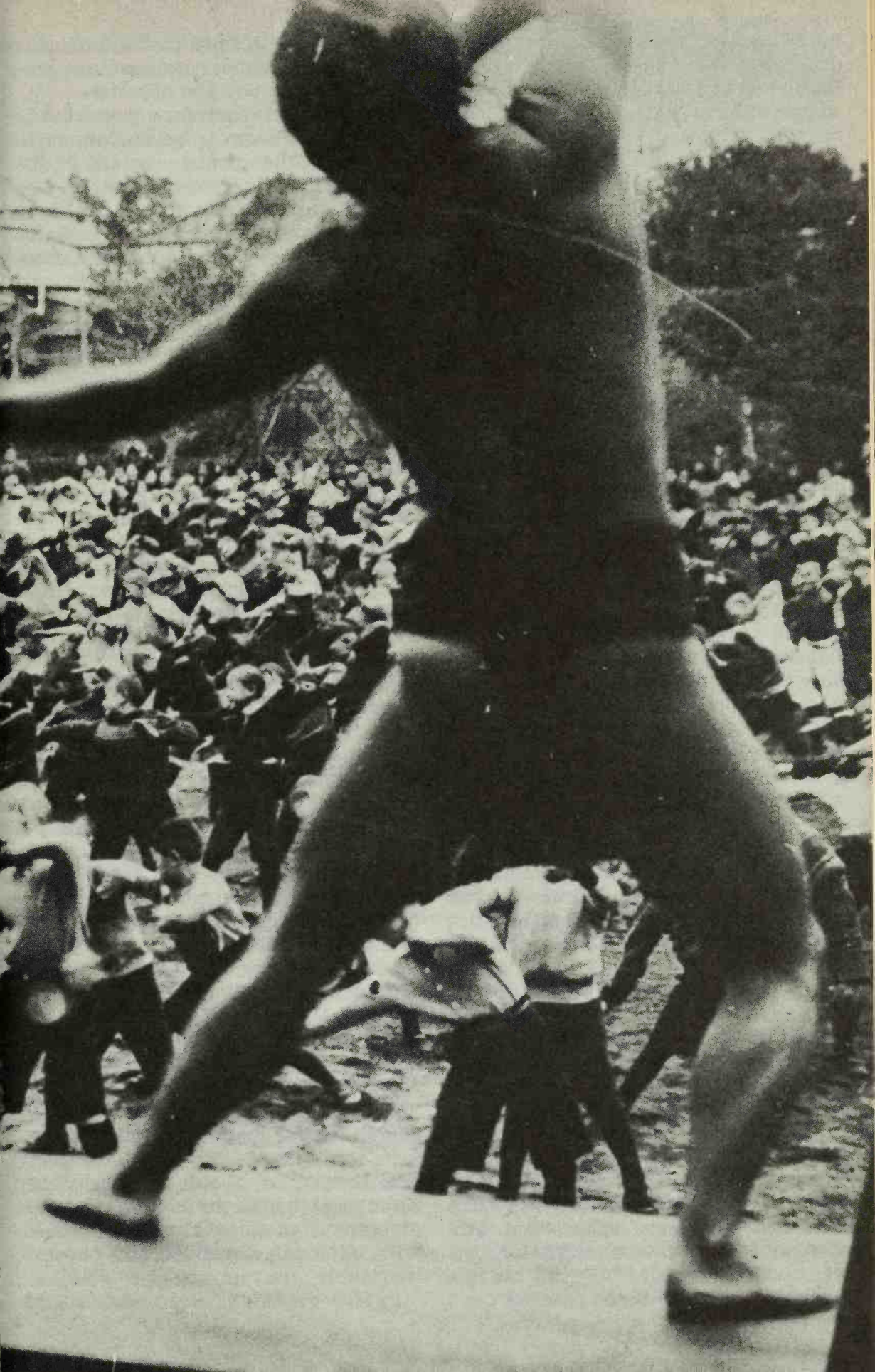
When Hirota promptly saw Malik on 24th June, however, the Soviet ambassador now stated that the previous Japanese proposal was too abstract; more specific details were required. On the 29th, Hirota brought a draft proposal originating with Togo, to the effect that both countries should support peace in Asia and arrange a relationship of non-aggression. More concretely, Manchukuo should be neutralized, and Japanese fishing rights traded for Soviet oil. 'Other possible requirements might be made by the USSR.' Hirota asked for an early response. Afterward, Malik refused to meet with Hirota (or with Togo) and feigned illness. Togo judged that local parleys were doomed when he learned the Soviet embassy had transmitted the Japanese proposal by courier, not by telegraph.

At the governmental level, on 28th June, Togo directed Ambassador Sato to obtain a swift reply from the Russian authorities regarding the proposals transmitted through Malik, although peace mediation was not mentioned. As the days passed without obvious activity, the Emperor called in Suzuki on 7th July and suggested that it might be wisest to speak frankly to the Russians about mediation. What about the idea of the Imperial envoy bearing a letter from the Throne? Suzuki, regretful, replied that Togo was now conferring with Konoye.

Kido had always had the idea of dispatching Konoye to Moscow. In fact, the Lord Keeper had seriously

School physical training led by a sumo wrestler





hoped to send the prince to confer directly with President Franklin Roosevelt in 1941, in a desperate effort to prevent war, by going over the head of the Japanese military and the cabinet. Kido hoped to try the same thing in 1945: Konoye would visit Russia and would send Kido a telegram when agreement was reached. Then the Lord Keeper would report to the Throne, obtain Imperial sanction, and present the accomplished fact to the cabinet, which would be in no position to deliberate even if desired. Konoye was the ideal emissary to work smoothly with the Emperor and with Kido. Suzuki consented, of course. Konoye told Togo he agreed to go to Moscow on this climactic trip, if directed, but he expected to be allowed flexibility of action. On 10th July, the supreme council formally approved the idea and looked ahead to working out details. Togo was anxious to expedite the diplomacy before the leaders of the United States, Britain, and the USSR met at Potsdam later in July.

In Moscow, Ambassador Sato had not been optimistic about the prospects for a new non-aggression pact; he felt that Japan should end the war without conditions, or rather with only the condition that the national polity be preserved. At Togo's urging, however, he pressed to see Molotov. The latter had been conferring in Moscow with the Chinese Nationalist foreign minister, TV Soong, and did not agree to meet with Sato until 11th July. The foreign minister provided the ambassador no satisfaction: 'more exhaustive study' was needed. Togo now urgently directed Sato to determine from Molotov the extent of Russian availability to assist in negotiations envisaging an end to the Pacific war. This was not the same thing as formally asking the USSR to mediate, but it was hoped that the Russians would now understand, directly and for the first time, that Japan was truly desirous of terminating the war. Molotov was to be assured that

Japan had no intention of annexing or holding areas under occupation; permanent peace was the objective.

Preparations therefore proceeded in earnest at Tokyo to send Konoye to Moscow. The prince received his commission from the Emperor personally on 12th July, whereupon Togo rushed another telegram to Sato. The ambassador was to secure Russian approval for Konoye's party to enter the USSR and, in fact, was to arrange for a Soviet plane to fly the group to Moscow. Before the Russians became involved in the Potsdam conference, Sato was to acquaint the Kremlin leaders with the Emperor's personal wish to terminate the war promptly 'for the sake of the happiness of mankind'. A fight to the death, dictated by the Anglo-American insistence upon unconditional surrender, would only lead to enormous further bloodshed. The Emperor consequently wished to send Prince Konoye as a special emissary bearing a personal message to the USSR.

By 14th July, the Japanese Big Six were discussing the composition of Konoye's party and the terms to be sought in Moscow. Representation by members of the foreign ministry, the army, and the navy was easily agreed upon, but not the conditions. Anami still argued that Japan should speak from strength, but Togo and Yonai replied that there might be a worse fate than acceptance of harsh terms of peace. The conferees evaded the issue, at this late stage, by agreeing to defer a decision until Konoye had actually reached Moscow and had begun negotiations with the Russians. When advised of these developments, Konoye reiterated his insistence that there be no binding instructions; unconditional surrender was by now the only course for Japan. Togo seems to have been unenthusiastic about 'troublesome' Konoye, although the foreign minister did agree that something very near to unconditional surrender had become inevitable.

In Moscow, Ambassador Sato asked

to see Molotov on the 13th. The foreign minister sent word that he was too busy because he was about to leave for the Potsdam conference. The vice minister, Lozovsky, instead saw Sato. When the latter delivered the information concerning the Emperor's desire to end the Pacific war and the request for authorization to dispatch Konoye's special mission, Lozovsky indicated that he would promptly pass the word to Molotov but doubted whether the foreign minister could reply before he left Moscow. Next night, Molotov departed with Stalin, about twenty-four hours after Sato had seen Lozovsky. There was no doubt in Japanese minds that the Russian leaders were fully cognizant of Tokyo's intentions when they left for Potsdam.

On 18th July, Sato received Lozovsky's rejection of the Japanese proposals. The Emperor's message struck the Russians as too general, lacking concrete propositions; the exact mission of Konoye was not clear. Sato's telegram reached Tokyo on the 20th. The ambassador berated the foreign ministry for an abstract approach which was ill-suited for dealing with the Soviets. It was quite probable that the Russian answer was made after consultation with the Americans and British at Potsdam. In any case, the Japanese feeler would by now be known to all the Allied leaders. And, at about this time, the women and children at the Soviet embassy in Tokyo sailed happily for home. Were they merely seeking refuge from the Allied bombings, an AGS officer mused, or did they know that Russia's entry into the Pacific war was at hand?

Still, Tokyo clutched at straws. If Moscow needed clarifications of the Imperial proposals, Togo was prepared to frame them. On the 21st, the foreign minister sent new directives to Sato, but it was still the Japanese position that a negotiated peace, not unconditional surrender, must be sought. There were international as well as domestic reasons for not revealing concrete conditions yet. Stress should



Inside a B-29: the bomber crews had cause for satisfaction

be laid upon the fact that Prince Konoye was close to the throne and was a very important personage in his own right in Japan. Konoye would be conveying the peace plan in detail, based upon the Imperial wishes. Soviet demands in Asia would be met, so far as possible, in return for the hoped-for Russian good offices.

Sato saw Lozovsky again on 25th July. The Russian's mood was earnest and courteous. Sato was convinced that he had made a considerable impression, as he repeatedly explained the envisaged role of Konoye. But an immense shock was in store for the well-intentioned fumblers in Tokyo. On the morning of 27th July, Japanese radio monitors picked up the text of a tripartite Anglo-American-Chinese declaration issued at Potsdam the day before. Japan was being given 'an opportunity to end this war' but, if she did not accept unconditional surrender of the armed forces, the only alternative was 'prompt and utter destruction'. Clausewitz's 'worst condition' was at last becoming a reality for Japan.

Japan in the death throes

The Potsdam Declaration July 26th 1945

Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender

1. WE - the President of the United States, the President of the National Government of the Republic of China, and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that Japan shall be given an opportunity to end this war.

2. The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied Nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

3. The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an

example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, *will* mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

4. The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.

5. Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.
6. There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled

the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

7. Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

8. The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.

9. The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

10. We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

11. Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

12. The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese

people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.

13. We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.

Upon receiving the broadcast of the Allied proclamation from Potsdam, the Japanese foreign ministry went over the translation with a fine-tooth comb. Togo's first reaction was that, in view of the language, 'Following are our terms,' it was evidently not a dictate of unconditional surrender for the country as a whole, and the phrase of unconditional surrender, used only once, was applied specifically to the case of the armed forces. It now seemed that the Emperor's wishes had got through to the United States and England, with a resultant moderation in attitude. Perhaps more importantly, the USSR had not signed the tripartite declaration and was therefore maintaining a policy of legal neutrality toward Japan, although the motives were not clear yet. Togo's political adviser suggested that it would not be a source of dread if, as the Allies demanded, 'a peacefully inclined and responsible government' were left to 'the freely expressed will of the Japanese people'. Certainly the majority of the nation was not thinking of abrogating the Imperial system. 'Let us have faith in the nation,' Togo was advised. Another relatively mild portion of the Allied declaration was the phrase 'to end this war,' instead of 'to surrender'. Such language might make it more palatable to the military leadership.

Nevertheless, Togo detected a number of uncertainties and ambiguities; e.g., the eventual form of the Japanese government, the questions of disposition of war criminals and disarmament, the matter of cities or points to be occupied 'in guarantee'. In any case, Togo directed Vice

Minister Matsumoto to investigate the legal aspects of the Potsdam declaration, while the foreign ministry sought to initiate negotiations with the Allies in order to obtain clarification and revision, however slight, of disadvantageous features. In reporting to the Throne on 27th July, Togo stressed the need for Japan not to manifest any intention to reject the declaration. Efforts should still be made to secure Soviet mediation – softening of the terms – which must determine Japan's policy. Togo said much the same thing when he addressed the supreme council later on the 27th. Admiral Toyoda argued that the public was bound to get wind of the declaration, and that morale would suffer unless the ultimatum were branded 'outrageous' publicly. Suzuki and Togo objected vigorously. It was agreed that nothing official should be said until Russia's response had been determined. When the cabinet met, it decided, under military pressure, that a censored version of the Potsdam declaration might be released to the press, but no official views were to be published, and editors should arrange minimum publicity. The most that newspapers might do, would be to add a comment that the government 'seemed to be ignoring the tripartite declaration'. It is noteworthy that not until this meeting on 27th July did Togo reveal to the entire cabinet that negotiations had been initiated with the Soviet Union.

Still later on the 27th there was a government-high command coordinating conference, ordinarily a strictly routine affair. Togo, tragically, had not thought it important enough to attend. But, at the conference, one military member proposed that the Potsdam declaration be rejected outright; whereupon a private meeting was hastily held between the premier and the four top military and naval chiefs. Reportedly, the more militant

officers prevailed upon Suzuki to speak out in the general vein of ignoring the declaration. At a subsequent press conference, the aged premier, inexperienced with journalists and hard of hearing, used an archaic word (*mokusatsu*) to explain the Japanese government's position of equivocation. Dictionaries provide variant interpretations of *mokusatsu*: 'to take no notice of,' 'to treat with silent contempt,' 'to ignore by keeping silence,' 'to remain in a wise and masterly inactivity'. Undoubtedly Suzuki, caught between dangerous currents, had the fourth meaning in mind. He certainly could not have meant 'to reject' baldly. But Japanese news agencies and broadcasters did translate *mokusatsu* as 'reject'. The



consequences were calamitous. Whether from sincere misunderstanding or from search for a pretext, both Washington and Moscow would soon invoke the word 'rejection' to justify unlimited violence unleashed against Japan. Togo, horrified at Suzuki's apparent reversal of the cabinet's decision, could do nothing to reverse the effect left by the prime minister. 'Had Suzuki been more steadfast,' laments Kase, 'or his advisers less stupid, we might have been spared the atomic attack'. It is ironic that, upon receiving the text of the Potsdam declaration and Togo's detailed explanation, the Emperor had 'said without hesitation that he deemed it acceptable in principle'. And, on 3rd August, a group of cabinet advisers

notified a state minister of their unanimous recommendation that Japan had no recourse but to accept the Potsdam declaration.

When Molotov, back from Potsdam, finally agreed to see Sato on 8th August, it was not to discuss mediation but to declare war against Japan. Events had cruelly overtaken the efforts of the Japanese 'doves' to save their country from destruction. Although the Potsdam declaration had warned that the Allies would brook no delay, the Japanese government was still trying to conduct routine diplomacy; death was near. At 8.15 am on 6th August, after the all-clear had been sounded from an earlier reconnaissance alert, a single B-29 bomber dropped the world's first





Admiral Yonai

atomic weapon from high altitude upon the city of Hiroshima. A parachute was seen falling, followed by a flash of blindingly intense light and a horrendous blast in the sky over the city's heart. '... a great, an enormous column of cloud,' writes Ibuse, '... trailed a single, thick leg beneath it, and reached up high into the heavens. Flattening out at its peak, it swelled out fatter and fatter like an opening mushroom. . . . Although the cloud seemed at first glance to be motionless, it was by no means so. The head of the mushroom would billow out first to the east, then to the west, then out to the east again; each time, some part or other of its body would emit a fierce light, in ever-changing shades of red, purple, lapis lazuli, or green. And all the time it went on boiling out unceasingly from within. Its stalk, like a twisted veil of fine cloth, went on swelling busily . . . The mushroom cloud was really shaped more like a jellyfish than a mushroom. Yet it seemed to have more animal vitality than any jellyfish, with its leg that quivered and its head that changed colour as it sprawled out slowly . . . writhing and raging . . .

It was an envoy of the devil himself . . . who else in the whole wide universe would have presumed to summon forth such a monstrosity?' Between 130,000 and 200,000 people died in agony, were injured horribly, or disappeared. Hiroshima was no more.

With all communications severed, the military in the Hiroshima area could not notify Tokyo till afternoon on the 6th that a bomb of unprecedented destructive power had been employed by the enemy. Although, next day, President Truman confirmed publicly that the weapon was atomic in nature and warned that more was in store unless the war was ended, the Japanese authorities were torn between skepticism and belief. Even if the American statement were true, could the Japanese populace at large be told? The newspapers on 8th August carried only a simple IGHQ communique to the effect that 'Hiroshima has suffered considerably from a new-type bomb'. Meanwhile, investigations proceeded, on the part of intelligence, ordnance, medical, and scientific experts. IGHQ received a report on 9th August that a special kind of bomb had indeed been utilized, but that burns could be prevented if one's body were covered. The local army headquarters then reported that people in white clothing were burned only slightly, that those in air-raid shelters were also burned only slightly, and that the huge fires were attributable to the fact the bomb was dropped while the inhabitants were preparing breakfast. The army was not only trying to prevent panic but was hoping to play down the effects of atomic weapons upon existing plans for the decisive battle for the homeland.

Prior to receipt of the field team's report from Hiroshima, Togo decided to recommend to the Throne that the Potsdam declaration be accepted without further ado. When the Emperor

Marquis Koichi Kido, the Emperor's closest adviser, in traditional garb





Above: The advance on Leyte. **Right:** More open country on Luzon

received him on the afternoon of the 8th, Togo reported all that was known about the disaster, from Japanese and enemy sources, and said that peace must now be sought immediately. The monarch agreed that continuation of the war was hopeless, and warned that precious time would be lost if attempts at bargaining were continued. Togo was to notify Suzuki of the Imperial wishes. The foreign minister conferred with Kido and then the premier, whom he asked to convene an emergency meeting of the supreme war direction council. Inconceivably, a meeting was delayed 'because some members were unable to attend'.

Early on the 9th, Japanese foreign ministry radio monitors picked up a Russian broadcast to the effect the USSR had declared war on Japan and that the Red Army was invading Manchuria. Togo and others could hardly believe the news. Ambassador Sato's cable never reached Tokyo.

Malik transmitted the word formally in Tokyo on 10th August. Some Japanese sources assert that the shock of Russia's 'betrayal' was more traumatic at the time than the news of the destruction of Hiroshima by a single bomb. The chief of AGS operations judged that nothing could be done but hope that the Kwantung Army would do its best and would be able to hold out as long as possible. When Anami received news of the Soviet ground invasion, he observed that 'the inevitable has at last come'. Premier Suzuki called in the chief of the cabinet planning bureau, Ikeda. 'Is the Kwantung Army capable of repulsing the Soviet army?' Suzuki asked. To which Ikeda replied, 'The Kwantung Army is hopeless. Within two weeks Hsinking (the capital of Manchukuo) will be occupied'. The premier sighed and said, 'Is the

Kwantung Army that weak? Then the jig is up'. Adds Colonel Hattori: 'All our diplomatic efforts of the past two months not only came to naught, but they were answered with a shattering blow'. The Russians struck not only at Manchuria but also at southern Sakhalin, the Kuriles, and North Korea.

Under ordinary circumstances, a premier of Japan might have resigned at this point. But times were hardly ordinary, and loyal Suzuki still must carry out his responsibility to the Emperor to end the war. He said as much to Togo and Sakomizu on the 9th. The sovereign meanwhile pressed Kido to get the government moving rapidly toward termination of hostilities. Suzuki promptly convened the supreme council at the palace, where he shook the military and naval conferees in particular by announcing that Japan would have to accept the Potsdam declaration. Hot discussion ensued as to the 'strings'

that should be attached to acceptance. Togo argued that only safeguarding of the national polity should be insisted upon, but the generals and admirals spoke of three other conditions respecting war criminals, disarmament, and enemy occupation. The foreign minister warned that negotiations with the Allies would be jeopardized by hopeless attempts at bargaining, and that forced invasion would ensue. Eventually the conferees agreed in principle to accept the tripartite declaration but reached no conclusion regarding conditions to be attached.

While the supreme council was consuming time in argument, a B-29 dropped the second atomic bomb, this time on Nagasaki at 11.30am on 9th August. Approximately 80,000 persons were killed, injured, or left missing in the cathedral city on Kyushu. Truly, the Allies seemed bent on obliterating every metropolis in Japan. The Americans reportedly had a hundred



of the fantastic new bombs, prisoners had revealed, and Tokyo was marked for final erasure. But, even now, the army high command notified all forces that the type of bomb dropped at Nagasaki was 'not formidable, and we have countermeasures'. To cite another example of the Japanese army's studied contempt for or ignorance of the fearsome effects of the nuclear bombs, it is said that on the morning of 14th August, Anami dined with Marshal Hata, who had come up to Tokyo from his headquarters at Hiroshima. 'The marshal told the minister . . . that the atomic bomb had hardly any effect on the ground one foot below the surface. Immediately, the minister told the marshal: "Please explain about this to the Emperor without fail when you report to him, and make him understand that the atomic bomb is not such a dreadful weapon".' Apparently Hata did not get the chance to tell this to the Emperor.

At 2pm on 9th August, the cabinet, in full session, finally discussed the matter of seeking peace immediately or of fighting on. Anami spoke of the honor of the race and of the need to take desperate chances to improve the critical situation. But Navy Minister Yonai urged the cabinet to abandon false pride and wishful thinking, and to save the country from total destruction by entering into prompt and realistic negotiations to end the war without further dangerous gambles. At Yonai's request, the various ministers presented reports on the recent domestic situation - munitions, food, transportation. All of the presentations were extremely gloomy. Since the conference still would not or could not agree to acceptance of the Potsdam declaration, a short recess was taken.

When the conference was resumed, Suzuki stated that the tripartite declaration must either be accepted or rejected; the supreme council had already decided in favor of acceptance. After a forceful presentation by Togo,

Anami declaimed passionately in favor of conditions, lest Japan meet Italy's sad fate. The army high command, he warned, was even more positive in this regard than he; it did not believe the war was lost. After further exchanges, Suzuki called on each participant for his view. Anami was joined by the justice minister and a state minister in opposing Togo's proposal. The state minister asked a painful question: 'What if the national polity could be retained but the Allies decided to charge the Emperor as a war criminal?' Yonai supported Togo, as did the ministers of agriculture and forestry, munitions, transportation, and education, plus another state minister. The remaining five ministers expressed no opinion. To a question whether the cabinet ought to resign because of the failure to obtain Soviet mediation, Suzuki reacted hotly and negatively. Peace was the first and foremost consideration. It was six hours since deliberations had begun; the premier announced adjournment at 8.30pm. He would now visit the Emperor to ascertain the monarch's wishes.

Suzuki and Togo were received by the Emperor at about 11pm on the 9th. After the foreign minister briefed the sovereign on the discussions that day, Suzuki asked for a special Imperial conference at once. The Emperor consented readily. It was to be a most unusual conference - the first of its kind to consider the question of the Potsdam declaration; the first to meet in the Imperial presence without prior agreement regarding the agenda. When the session opened at 11.50pm, Sakomizu read the entire Potsdam document, as the Emperor wished. Then Suzuki personally read a proposed statement that the Japanese government accepted the declaration, with the understanding that the terms did not constitute any demand to alter the status of the Emperor under national law. The premier explained the division of opinion in the cabinet regarding the dispute as to whether

there should be one or four conditions. The majority having shared Togo's view, the foreign minister's position was presented as the basis of the proposed reply by the Japanese government. Suzuki wanted His Majesty to hear the various positions. Togo defended his stance; Yonai concurred fully. Anami and the AGS chief, Umezu, were inwardly furious with Suzuki's 'high-handed and arbitrary handling of the conference; they had not even been consulted about the proposed policy statement. Masking their displeasure, they spoke vigorously in favor of fighting on, or at least of incorporating the four conditions as the army's maximum compromise. Hiranuma, privy council president, next made a cautious presentation supporting Togo's view, but with many 'if's' and 'but's' and improvements in wording. The NGS chief, Toyoda, vigorously supported Anami and Umezu. Victory was by no means certain, total defeat by no means inevitable.

Two hours had been expended but no decision was forthcoming. At 2am on the 10th, Suzuki stated that he must humbly submit the question for the Emperor's decision; the conference would abide by the Imperial desire. Actually, there had already been great pressure by senior statesmen and high officials to prevent the attachment of the four conditions to acceptance of the Allied declaration. Among those who urged Kido, directly or indirectly, to take countermeasures were Prince Konoye, Prince Takamatsu, Shigemitsu, Matsudaira, Takagi, and Kase. Kido was reluctant to trouble the Emperor again, but he did confer with the monarch at least four times on the 9th. Meanwhile Yonai, Sakomizu, and other cabinet members had been urging Suzuki to guide the conference in the direction of an Imperial decision as a last resort, rather than leave the matter to majority vote.

After Suzuki had made his dramatic plea to the Emperor, the latter asked the premier to be seated and then, in

quiet tones, stated that he approved the opinion of the foreign minister. The planning of the army and the navy had been 'erroneous and untimely'. Despite the intention to wage a decisive campaign on homeland soil, defensive beach works at Kujukurihama, only seventy miles from Tokyo, were far behind schedule. New divisions lacked equipment. How could an invasion ever be repulsed? Air raids were increasing in severity. 'To subject the people to further suffering, to witness the destruction of civilization, and to invite the misfortune of mankind, are entirely contrary to my wishes.' Disarmament of the loyal armed forces and indictment of citizens as war criminals were indeed painful to contemplate, but it was inevitable for the salvation of the country. Japan must bear the unbearable. On this climactic note, the Imperial conference ended at 2.30am on the 10th. The cabinet then resumed its session and, without objection, by 4am endorsed a decision based upon the Emperor's expressed wishes.

Togo immediately oversaw the drafting of telegrams of notification to the Allies. The messages to the United States and China were transmitted on the 10th through the Japanese embassy in Switzerland; those to Britain and Russia, through Sweden. Ambassador Malik, when he saw Togo in Tokyo on the 10th to serve the Russian declaration of war, was told to notify his government that Japan had accepted the Potsdam declaration. As an additional means of reaching the Allied leadership, the Domei news service and NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) sent out the news on the night of the 10th, at the request of the vice minister of foreign affairs.

The cabinet met on the afternoon of the 10th to discuss procedures for revealing to the Japanese populace that the tripartite declaration was being accepted. It was decided that no official statement should be made before an Imperial rescript was issued.

Meanwhile, steps should be taken informally to prepare the people for the end of the war; for example, the chief of the information bureau, Shimomura, made a vague 'background' broadcast on the night of the 10th, published by the morning newspapers on the 11th. Concerned by the need to maintain military morale and discipline – whether the war was to end or to be continued, Anami allowed the drafting and publication of a belligerent public message over his signature. Shimomura's and Anami's messages seemed to suggest to astute readers that the views of the government and of the military must be in sharp disarray.

Shortly after midnight on 11th August, Japanese foreign ministry, news, and military monitors picked up the broadcast of the American-coordinated reply by Secretary Byrnes to the question whether the Potsdam declaration prejudiced the prerogatives of the Emperor as a sovereign ruler. Although the official text did not reach Tokyo via Berne until early on the 13th, enough was known by the 12th to warrant analysis. Remaining ambiguities and harshnesses were bound to upset most of the Japanese leadership, and Togo wondered whether demands for further clarification would not wreck the negotiations. Trusted associates convinced Togo that this was the best that could be expected. Word also came that Suzuki intended to accept the Allied answer. When Togo visited the Emperor on the 12th, he was prepared to recommend acceptance. Togo's memoirs record that the monarch 'considered that, the reply being satisfactory, we should accept it as it stood'. This is all the more courageous when one notes that, earlier on the 12th, AGS chief Umezu and NGS chief Toyoda (without consulting Yonai) had recommended to the Emperor that the Allied note be

**Supplies are landed at Tacloban,
Leyte, for the invading Americans**





rejected resolutely. The high command, they stressed, judged that the enemy intended to render Japan a tributary state and to debase the dignity of the monarch, who was the apex of the national polity. The army, in fact, radioed all commands on the 12th, in the name of the war minister and the AGS chief, reassurance that the war must continue, since the national polity was in danger.

Thus, when the cabinet reconvened at 3pm on the 12th, the old cleavage between 'hawks' and 'doves' had only been exacerbated, although the Imperial wish had already been uttered. Despite Togo's explanations and exhortation of alacrity, plus Yonai's support, Anami and several ministers insisted that the Allies must be contacted for clarification of dangerous points, particularly with regard to the statement that the ultimate form of Japanese government must 'be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people'. Suzuki himself, confessing to misgivings about disarmament and the future of the Imperial system under enemy occupation, unexpectedly came around to Anami's view and said that the war would have to go on unless Japanese demands were accepted. Togo, discomfited enormously, managed to secure an adjournment until the formal text of the Allied reply arrived next day. He then expressed his bitter personal disappointment to Suzuki, and reminded him of the Emperor's own desire. For a while, the foreign minister even thought of resigning. Kido intervened to smooth over these startling last-minute complications, and persuaded Suzuki to comprehend what was in the Emperor's mind and to accept the Allied note without additional bandying of words.

While the cabinet had been in session on the 12th, the Imperial princes met with the Emperor at the palace. The monarch personally explained the latest developments and asked for cooperation in this supreme crisis. On behalf of all members of the



Imperial family, Prince Nashimoto gave assurances to the Emperor. Soon after the conference adjourned, Anami visited Prince Mikasa and asked him to persuade the sovereign to reconsider his decision. Not only did Mikasa refuse, but he apparently reprimanded the military for their behavior ever since the Manchurian Incident of 1931. This censure by a brother of the Emperor may well have affected Anami's eventual decision to commit suicide in atonement.

To gain time, officials in the foreign ministry delayed dissemination of the definitive Allied reply, actually received from Berne and Stockholm on the evening of the 12th, until next morning. There was really nothing new in these telegrams, of course. At 9am on the 13th, the Big Six met to discuss policy toward the Allied reply. Anami, Umezu, and Toyoda still spoke of a need to amend certain paragraphs, and even to submit the conditions regarding disarmament



and occupation. The officers clearly dreaded Allied suppression and coercion under occupation, despite vaguely beneficent phraseology in the declaration. Togo warned again that such maneuvering was out of the question by now, but no conclusion had been reached by 3pm, when Suzuki recessed the meeting. In the meantime, at 2pm, Togo had left to report in detail to the Emperor, who asserted that the foreign minister's position was entirely appropriate and asked him to tell the premier so.

The cabinet met again at 4pm on the 13th. Suzuki requested each minister to speak up definitively. Despite much dissatisfaction with the Allied reply, most of the officials agreed with Togo's stand. Anami continued his opposition, ostensibly to be of assistance to his monarch; he argued that it was craven to 'knuckle under' to the Allies in every way, without even seeking to dispel the misgivings entertained by all. Finally

United States Navy task force assembled in Lingayen Gulf, Luzon

Suzuki asserted that he had now changed his mind about the need to continue the war, because there had been major developments recently, e.g., the use of the atomic bombs, the attack by the USSR. After reading and rereading the Allied reply, he had reached the opinion that the phraseology was not malicious. Fighting on might be personally satisfying, but it would endanger the future of Japan, and it contravened the Imperial wish. Since no general agreement had been reached, however, Suzuki would report candidly to the Throne and again beg the Emperor to hand down a decision. Anami continued to insist upon the need for conditions, despite Yonai's and Suzuki's opposition, and he won considerable support for his position.

The trend on high was causing profound anxiety and hostility among the

army and navy staffs. A number of section chiefs, meeting on the afternoon of the 13th, agreed to prevent the convening of another Imperial conference until the 'doves' could be prevailed upon to recant. Many visits were made to Imperial princes and senior generals and admirals, in an effort to win their support. The results were not encouraging. Umezu and Toyoda also sought to convince Togo to agree to the conditions, but the foreign minister would not yield.

Already, on 12th August, war ministry officers had asked Anami to 'take emergency measures when necessary'. If Anami could not prevent national

Harry S Truman, new to the Presidency, took the decision to drop the bomb

disgrace, he should kill himself. Since events were moving rapidly in the direction of unconditional surrender, AGS and war ministry staff officers devised plans on the 13th to use force to quash the 'doves'. Troops were to be drawn from the Eastern District Army and the Imperial Guards Division. Kido, Suzuki, Togo, Yonai, and other major personages were to be isolated by force, while senior statesmen favoring peace would be kept away from the palace. Until definitive assurance had been obtained regarding conditions for upholding the national polity, Japan would not surrender but would carry on the negotiations. However, the assent of the war minister, the AGS chief, and the local district army and division command-



ing generals must first be obtained.

At 9pm on the 13th, Anami was visited at his official residence by a delegation of staff officers whom he especially trusted and who trusted him: Colonel Arao (military affairs section chief in the war ministry), Lieutenant-Colonels Takeshita (Anami's devoted brother-in-law), Inaba, Ida, and Shiizaki, and Major Hatanaka were there, among others. For an hour and a half, these officers conferred passionately with Anami; they wanted their plan to go into effect on the morning of the 14th. The general gave no sign of consenting, or of disapproving for that matter. When the officers pressed him, he told Arao to see him again at midnight at the war ministry. At the time the two conferred, later, Anami merely spoke in roundabout fashion about the difficulty of waging a decisive homeland battle and about the poor prospects of a coup, but he still did not say Yes or No. He would see Umezu about the plan in the morning. Regardless of his words, Anami's attitude seems to have conveyed the impression to certain staff officers that he was inwardly in agreement with a coup. Actually Anami, worried about an emergency, summoned Military Police Commander Okido and warned him that important orders must be directly issued only by the war minister or the vice minister. This meant that Okido should beware of false instructions. Anami also cautioned Imperial Guards Division Commander Mori to leave nothing undone in defending the Imperial palace. On the 14th, at 7am, after seeing Marshal Hata and talking about Hiroshima, and after being pressed again by the eager rebels, Anami went with Arao to sound out Umezu. The AGS chief would not endorse the plan, which thereby lost all prospect of official, high-level military backing, for Anami still refused to be explicit.

On the afternoon of 13th August, Japanese radio monitors picked up an American broadcast blaming the Jap-

anese government for stalling. The same day, Allied carrier-planes struck with particular fury. From that afternoon till morning on the 14th, enemy planes dropped leaflets on Tokyo and other cities, with details of the till-then secret negotiations in progress concerning peace on the basis of acceptance of the Potsdam declaration. Kido showed the Emperor a leaflet on the 14th and obtained permission to begin arrangements to terminate the war, since the Allied propaganda was bound to inflame the 'hawks' and cause confusion in the land, while the Soviet armies were knifing through the 'paper tiger' which was the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. Suzuki and Kido found themselves in full agreement that an emergency Imperial conference was imperative, although the service ministers angrily opposed irregular methods of convening it. On the morning of the 14th, the premier and the Lord Keeper requested the Emperor personally to call a joint session of the supreme council and all cabinet members to meet in his presence. Such an Imperial conference had not met since just before the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The sovereign consented immediately. As a consequence, around 10am, all of the proposed participants were summoned to appear at the air-raid shelter in the palace, on thirty minutes' notice. 'We were notified that, it being a sudden call to audience,' writes Togo, 'the wearing of formal attire would be dispensed with, and the ministers who in midsummer were without even neckties borrowed them from the secretaries and managed to preserve a decency barely adequate to the occasion'. Meanwhile, at 10am, the Emperor called in the highest officers on active duty and available - Marshals Sugiyama and Hata (just in from Hiroshima) and Fleet Admiral Nagano. After advising them of his decision to finish the war, the monarch demanded and received military and naval compliance. The finale was near.

Finale

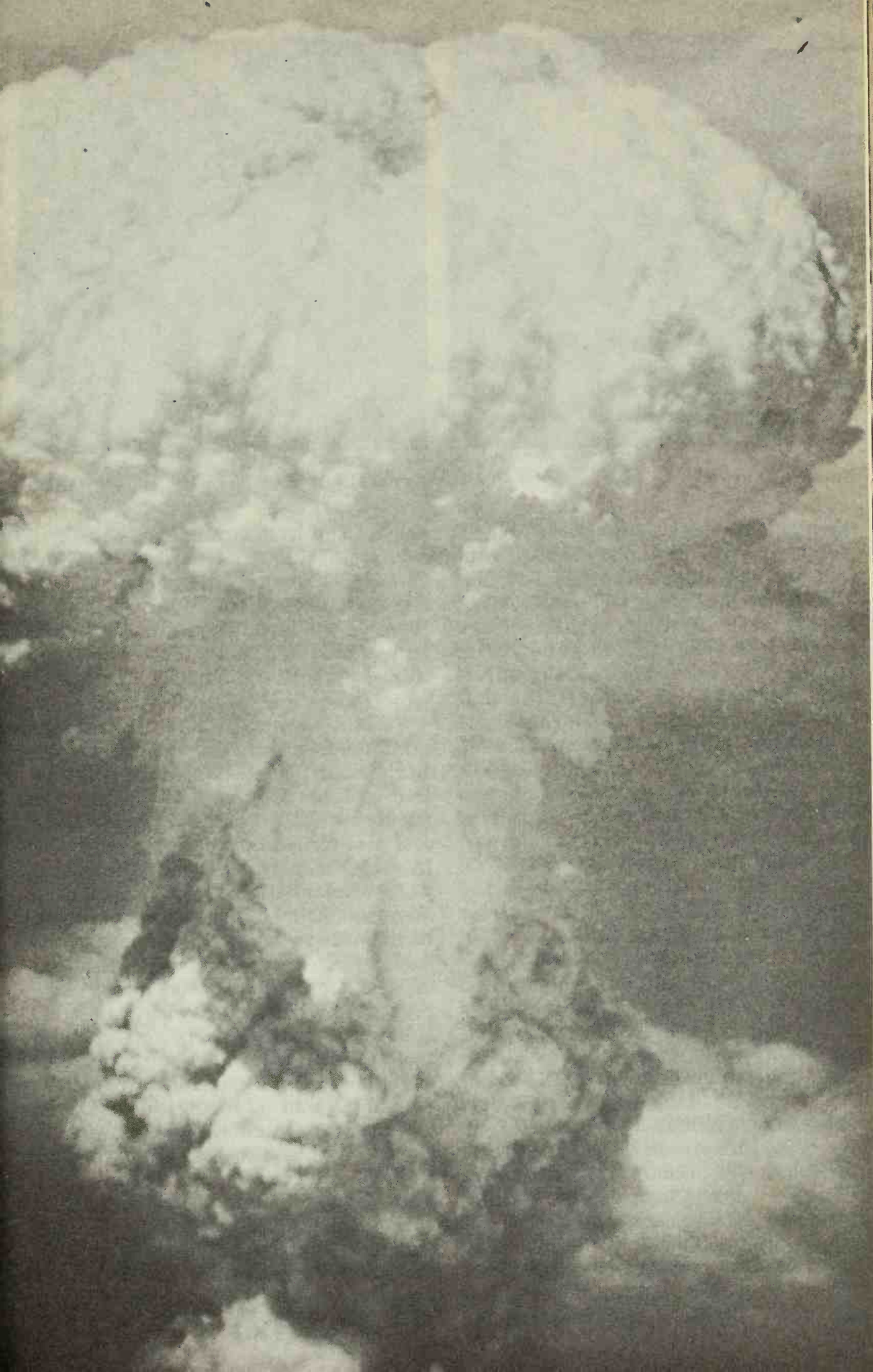
The last Imperial conference of the war met at 10.50am on 14th August. Suzuki, surprisingly sharp, reported to the Emperor on the recent conferences and the failure to achieve a consensus regarding Togo's and his own proposals. Although it was an awesome matter for him, he must again trouble His Majesty for a decision, after all opinions opposing acceptance of the Allied note had been heard. Umezu, Toyoda, and Anami then pleaded emotionally for sanction of their request that further explanations be obtained from the Allies, until which time the nation should fight on, desperately.

The Emperor broke the ensuing silence to pronounce his fateful decision. He was fully acquainted with the recent controversy about acceptance of the Allied reply, but he had had no reason to modify his original, carefully thought-out determination to accept the Potsdam declaration. The latest explications generally confirmed the first impressions. He agreed with the foreign minister that, from the tone of the Allied answer, there seemed to be no intention to subvert

the national polity. As a matter of fact, the country's structure might be smashed and the population annihilated unless hostilities were ended immediately. 'It is therefore my wish that we bear the unbearable, suffer the insufferable, and accept the Allied reply, thus to preserve the state as a state and to spare my subjects further suffering. I wish you all to act in that intention.' The service ministers had reported opposition within the armed forces; the monarch wanted the army and navy to be made to comprehend his wishes, although he fully understood the unendurable feelings of agony.

In this tense and noiseless basement, thirty meters underground, the atmosphere was electric. Sakomizu heard his tears fall on the papers before him. The Emperor was leaning forward a little as he spoke, quickly wiping away his own tears, first with one hand, then with both. Among his distinguished auditors, it is said that muffled sobbing broke out when His Majesty, overcome with emotion and

Nagasaki





General Umezu



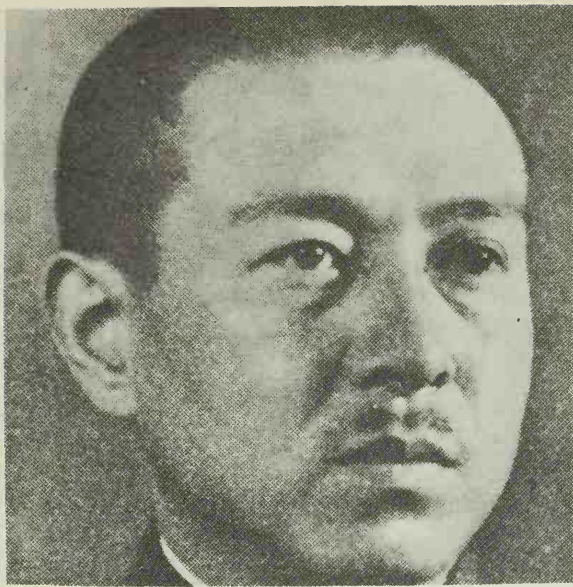
General Anami

speaking haltingly, said that, 'regardless of what may happen to me, I want to save the people's lives . . . I cannot bear to see the people suffering further . . . my heart is filled with grief and sorrow . . .' The groans and tears became uncontrollable as the sovereign proceeded to say, 'If there is anything that I ought to do, I shall not spare myself. If it is desirable for me to appeal to the nation, I shall speak over the radio at any time'. If necessary, he would personally appeal to the armed forces to maintain order. The main thing now was to strive to re-build the country, as long as the roots remained. An Imperial rescript should be drafted immediately.

The premier replied that the Imperial wish would be implemented promptly, and he apologized humbly for having brought pain to the Emperor on more than one occasion. After the monarch departed, some of the ministers dropped to the floor, where they knelt in awe and grief. 'It was an inexpressibly solemn and moving scene,' recalled Togo; 'as we retired down the long corridor, while returning in our cars, and at the resumed cabinet meeting, each of us in his thoughts wept again'. The cabinet worked all afternoon and evening on the draft of the Imperial rescript

ending the war. Anami pressed for a rephrasing of 'offensive' wording. Finally, Suzuki brought a rather messy document to the Emperor after 10pm on the 14th. The Emperor signed and affixed his seal. Thereupon the cabinet countersigned the rescript, which was promulgated at 11pm.

At the same time, the foreign ministry sent urgent telegrams, via Berne and Stockholm, notifying the four Allied powers that Japan was accepting the Potsdam declaration and was prepared to implement the Imperial rescript. Other telegrams were transmitted with the Japanese government's plea that consideration be accorded a number of concessions designed to insure smooth fulfilment of the country's obligations, e.g., regarding honorable disarmament, token occupation, early repatriation from abroad, allowance for communications delays, attention to the sick, wounded, and starving on isolated islands in the Pacific. Anami now came over to Togo and stated very formally, 'I have seen the foreign ministry's draft of the communication to the Allied powers regarding the occupation and disarmament, and I am grateful beyond expression. Had I known that the matter would be dealt with in that way, I should not have felt it



Lieutenant-Colonel Takeshita

necessary to speak so zealously at the Imperial conference'. Togo replied that he had only resisted proposing conditions, but had never opposed expressing Japan's desires to the Allies. Anami again thanked Togo formally. Although the war minister seemed overly polite (he was, in fact, preparing to commit suicide), 'we all parted with smiles, saying to each other that it was good that it was over'. In full attire, Anami then visited Suzuki to apologize for all of the recent troubles and to assure the old premier that his principal objective had always been only the preservation of the national polity and the safety of the Emperor. Cordial words were exchanged, Anami presented Suzuki with a package of rare cigars, saluted stiffly, and left in silence. 'I think that the war minister came to say goodbye,' Suzuki told an aide.

Anami went back to the war ministry and conveyed the gist of the Imperial decision. There was concern among the cabinet ministers that Anami might resign at this point, thereby bringing down the cabinet and wrecking measures to implement the negotiations. Indeed, some army officers did recommend precisely such a course to the war minister on the 13th. But to Anami, once the Emperor



Jacob Malik

had spoken, there could be no choice except absolute personal obedience. On the evening of the 14th, Anami and Umezu signed a painful message radioed to all IGHQ commands, designed to acquaint the army with the background of the Imperial decision and to exhort the forces not to take any rash actions which would bring dishonor. On the 14th and 15th, Anami, Umezu, and Yonai also instructed their subordinates in the same vein, with particular stress upon the meaning of the Imperial will. To the frustrated officers at headquarters, who had promised to follow him, no matter his course, Anami thundered, 'Anyone who disagrees now will have to do so over my dead body!'

Meanwhile, NHK was given the bombshell news that the Emperor himself would address the nation on the 15th, and would read the rescript of capitulation over the radio. The cabinet decided that it would be best for the monarch to make a recording at the Imperial household ministry. Recording equipment was secretly brought to the palace grounds. The deliberations of the cabinet, the dragged-out countersigning of the rescript, and an air-raid alert seriously delayed the actual recording. When the Emperor finally recited his speech,

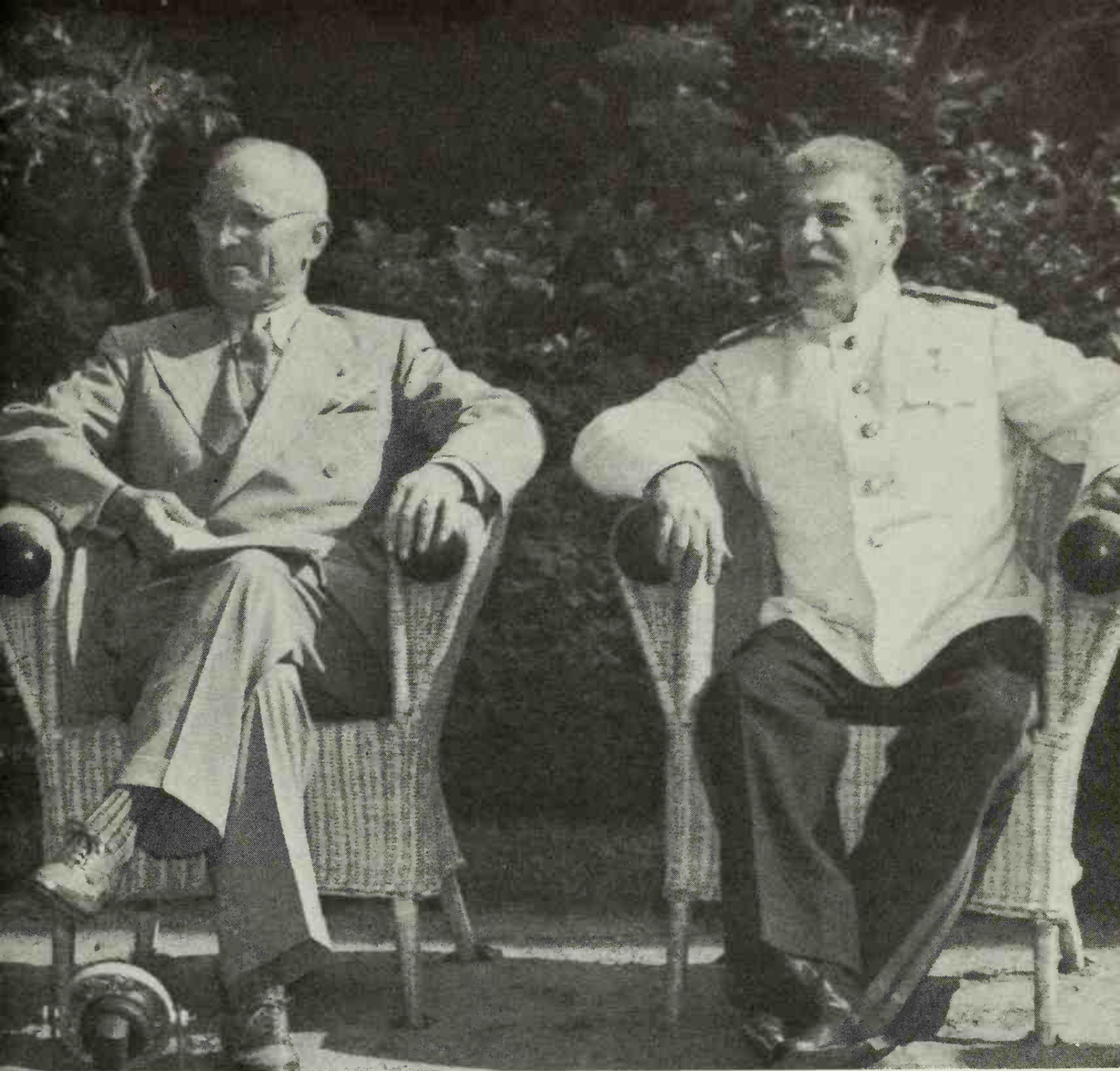
the pitch was poor and a few words were inaudible. Tense, high-pitched, and visibly torn by emotion, he made a second recording, and was even ready to make a third. The Imperial retainers agreed that the ordeal was too much to ask. The completed disks were then hidden by a chamberlain in an obscure safe in the Imperial household ministry. The entire nation was to listen to the broadcast at noon on 15th August, without prior publicity in the press.

The supreme test of Anami's integrity was yet to come. Instead of sanctioning the plot for a *coup d'état*, he had, after seeing Umezu on the morning of the 14th, ordered the Eastern Army District commander to reinforce security and to insure public order. Hatanaka and Shiizaki, however, would not abandon their conspiracy. As Takeshita later explained, 'The news of the Imperial decision pained us severely. Although preservation of the national polity had been made the sole condition for surrender, disbandment of the Japanese armed forces and occupation of our homeland by foreign troops would mean that we would be compelled to change the national polity in whatever way the occupation forces desired. Since such a unique national polity as we enjoyed was beyond the understanding of foreign nations, there was little doubt that the occupation forces would eventually compel us to transform it as they wished . . . It would be useless for the people to survive the war if the structure of the state itself were to be destroyed . . . Although a coup would mean temporary disobedience to the present Emperor – a situation certainly to be avoided – to act in compliance with the wishes of his Imperial ancestors would constitute a wider and truer loyalty to the Throne, in the final analysis . . . True loyalty must accompany remonstrance and exploitation . . . We decided that the peace faction should be overruled and a *coup d'état* staged in order to prevail upon the Emperor to revoke



his decision. The purpose of the projected *coup d'état* was to separate the Emperor from his peace-seeking advisers and persuade him to change his mind and continue the war. It was not considered essential to kill the members of the peace faction. All we wanted was a military government with all political power concentrated in the hands of the war minister'.

Disgusted with the speed of the 'doves', around midnight on the 14th the plotters went to Imperial Guards Division headquarters to try to induce Division Commander Mori to cooperate. Entrusted with defense of the Imperial palace and under direct command of the Emperor, in theory, Mori said he could never betray the sovereign's decision, whatever his



own previous views. A white-faced Hatanaka emerged from the general's office, pistol in hand, at about 2 am on the 15th. 'Pardon me,' he said, 'I have disposed of him for fear that we may only waste more time this way'. Mori had been talking about going to worship at the Meiji shrine 'to help him make up his mind'. On the floor lay Mori and Staff Officer Shiraishi, hacked and shot to death.

A bogus division order was then issued over the name of Mori. Colonel Haga, one of the guards regiment commanders, was directed to reinforce the defenses of the palace and to isolate it. Haga did as ordered. Meanwhile, Hatanaka and his fiery associates began a desperate search of the Imperial household ministry for the

The Big Three: Churchill, Truman, Stalin

Emperor's fateful recording. The air-raid alert kept the palace grounds blacked out; none of the retainers, although some were roughed up, knew anything or would say anything. The frenzied search failed, and nothing came of an isolated wild effort to air the rebels' pleas over national radio. When Colonel Haga learned of the murder of Mori, he realized that the orders had been false and he accepted no more. Advised of these shocking developments, the Eastern District Army commander, General Tanaka, placed all of the Imperial guards forces under his personal control and raced, alone, to the Imperial palace. Defying any smouldering remains of



The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, 6th August 1945.
Above : Survivors flee the city. *Above right* : The observatory, one of the few buildings that withstood the blast, now a memorial. *Below* : The damage









The Big Three in conference at Potsdam, July 1945. Clement Attlee has replaced Winston Churchill

rebellion, he harangued the plotters and broke up the insurrection. By about 8am, having restored the situation, he reported to the Throne that there was no need for further concern about the incident.

Anami had already committed suicide, in most painful fashion, during the early hours of the 15th, after having countersigned the Imperial rescript without an overt murmur. He fell toward the palace, which he revered. Nearby, spattered with his blood, he left two wills. One, drawn up in his capacity as war minister, stated that, 'With my death, I apologize humbly to the Emperor for grave offenses'. Shortly before he disemboweled himself, he was told of the mutiny at the palace. He said that the incident would not expand, but that he would make apology for this disgrace too. Anami left another farewell poem in which he said he left the world without regrets, because he had basked in the Imperial favor. Even his old adversary in polemics, Togo, was deeply moved when he heard the news. 'He did commit *harakiri*, did he? There was a splendid chap'. Added Tonai, whom Anami supposedly detested, 'We've lost a very valuable man'. 'It was as if his afflictions had conquered him,' Kase remarks. 'He was obviously in a dilemma from which it was humanly impossible to extricate himself.'

An insurgent Imperial guards staff officer, Major Koga, killed himself at division headquarters after the wake for General Mori. On the palace plaza, plotters Shiizaki and Hatanaka committed suicide at 11.20am on the 15th. 'Beneath the molten orange midday sun,' writes a Japanese historian, 'the grass in front of the Imperial palace was stained with human blood and brain; the men who resisted peace with all their strength had found peace at last.'

Aftermath

At noon on 15th August 1945, after being alerted since early morning, the Japanese people tuned in to a most remarkable radio broadcast. For the first time in Japanese history, the Emperor's high, thin voice was heard by the multitudes. The unaccustomed language was stilted and formal, and the word 'capitulation' was nowhere mentioned, but it was apparent the nation was being called upon to accept defeat graciously and conscientiously. Stressing the need for unity and continuity, the monarch was enjoining the populace to beware of outbursts of national emotion or 'fraternal contention and strife which may create confusion, lead ye astray and cause ye to lose the confidence of the world'.

As Kawai says, the horrors of the final phase of the war had reduced many Japanese to 'an inner state bordering on panic'. One of Umezaki's characters had already become 'acutely conscious of something unseen tightening its neck around me and hemming me in'. Yet the people at large were psychologically unprepared for the shattering *dénouement*. It was

widely expected that the Emperor would exhort and encourage the country to fight to the death with him against invaders from all directions. The mass propaganda media had been pouring forth the army's warnings of barbarous foes bent upon rapine and pillage. A hundred million loyal and fanatical subjects would rise in support of an 'unbroken' army and a land that had never been conquered in war. Proud and intensely patriotic, many Japanese – soldiers as well as civilians – now wept unabashedly as they listened to the Imperial rescript and realized the hopeless truth. 'I was so agitated that I felt unsteady on my feet,' recalls one survivor. '... scalding tears suddenly streamed from my eyes ... in an endless flow. The landscape, through my tears, became distorted and disjointed. I clenched my teeth ... fighting back the choking sensation which rose in my thought. My mind was a confused jumble ... and nothing was clear any more. I did not even know whether I was sad'.

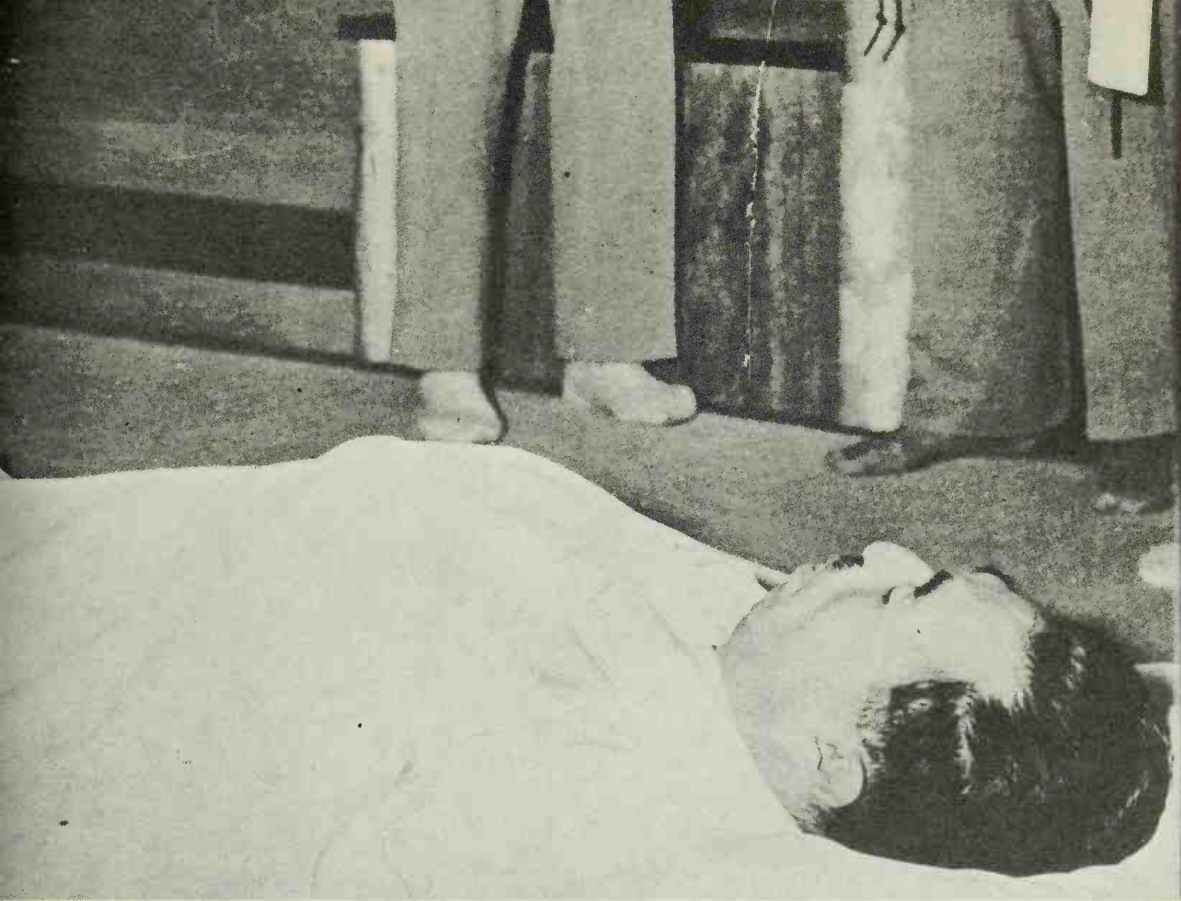
A Japanese prisoner-of-war reacts to the news of his country's surrender



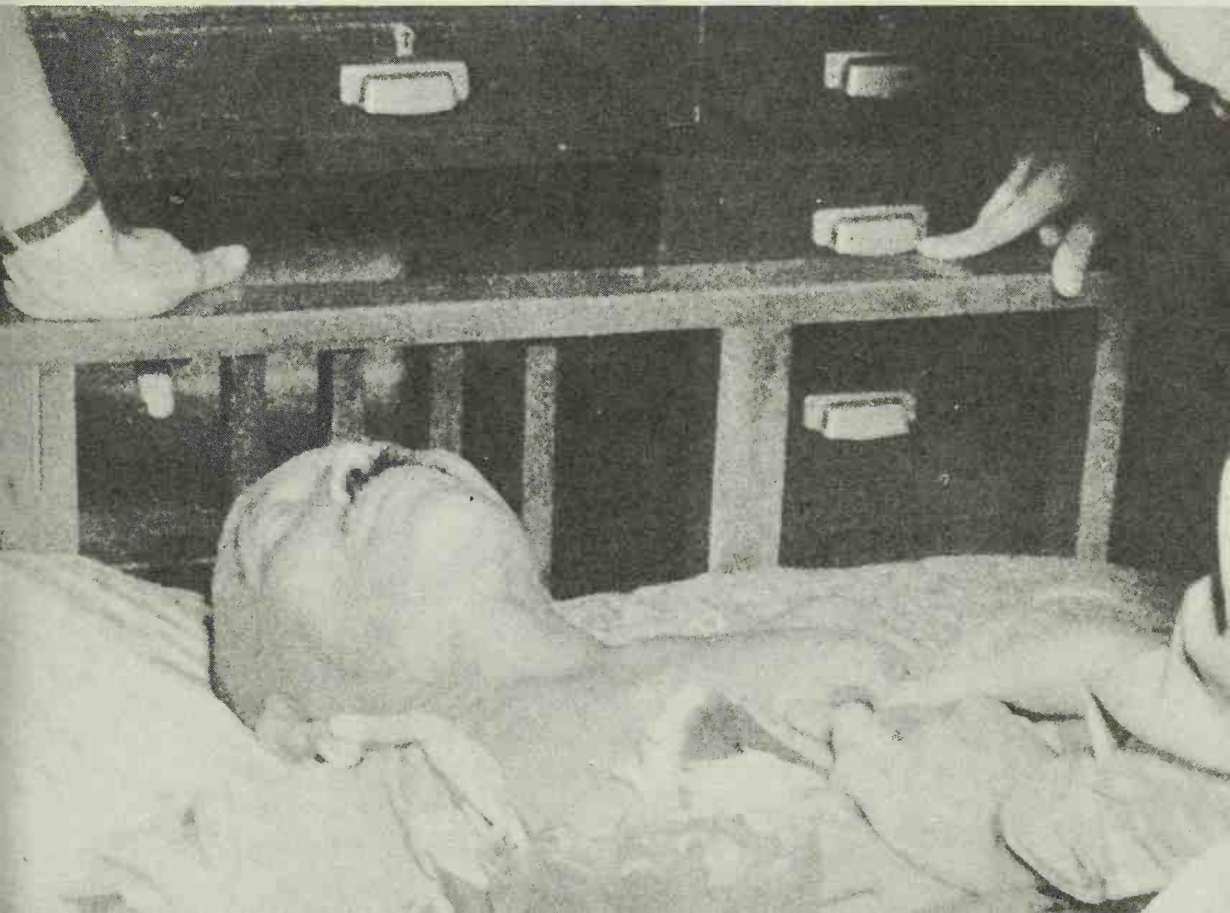


Above : Foreign Minister Shigemitsu signs the surrender document. *Below :* Japanese delegation discusses preliminaries at Atsugi airfield





Above : Prince Konoye, one of many suicides. ***Below :*** Tojo's attempt to kill himself with a bullet in the chest failed







Left: 'Tokyo Rose', the American born Japanese broadcaster, Iva Toguri, is interviewed. Above: A soldier returns to the makeshift home built by his bombed-out family

Remarks another Japanese, a devout Buddhist: 'It was neither all grief nor all rejoicing, but a feeling as if gasping for air'. The sensitive novelist Oe, then a ten-year-old villager, tells how 'the adults sat around their radios and cried. The children gathered outside in the dusty road and whispered their bewilderment. We were most confused and disappointed by the fact that the Emperor had spoken in a human voice, no different from any adult's. None of us understood what he was saying, but we all had heard his voice. One of my friends could even imitate it cleverly. Laughing, we surrounded him - a twelve-year-old in grimy shorts who spoke with the Emperor's voice. A minute later we felt afraid. We looked at one another; no one spoke. How

could we believe that an august presence of such awful power had become an ordinary human being on a designated summer day?'

Any doubts that assailed the Japanese people were dissolved when the text of the rescript was printed in the afternoon papers of 15th August. In the evening, Premier Suzuki broadcast an appeal for solidarity behind the Throne during this grave national crisis, 'to restore the empire to its proper place in the world as quickly as possible'. The first public reactions were shock and pain, bewilderment and disbelief. Many blamed themselves for failing monarch and country. From evening on the 15th, in Tokyo, crowds of somber subjects trooped to the pebble-filled Imperial plaza to bow toward the palace in deepest reverence and atonement. Amidst sobs, some sang *Kimigayo*, the national anthem. Thousands of others flocked to the sacrosanct Meiji shrine and to Yasukuni, the shrine for the

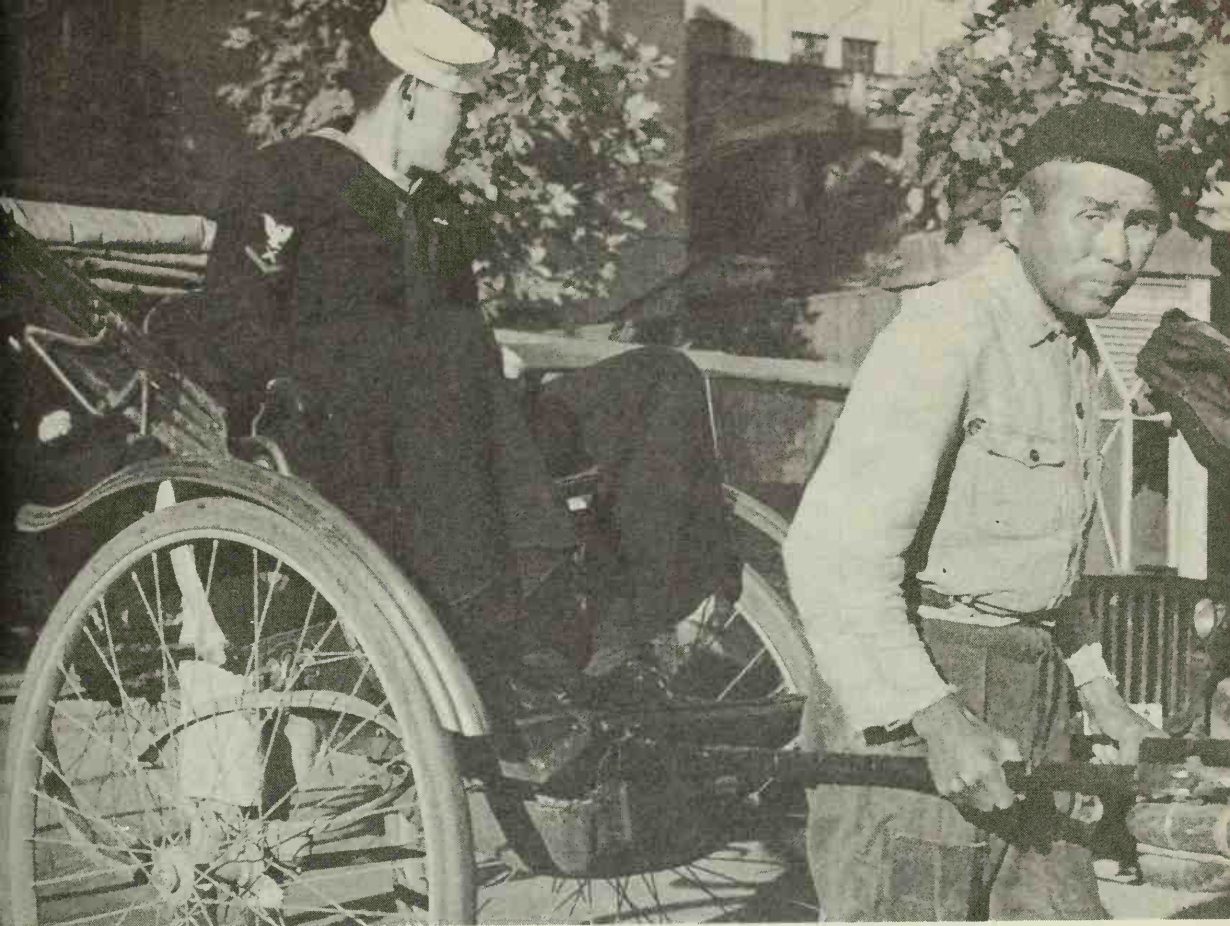
war dead, to pray and to apologize in agonies of silence.

Some few, especially among extremists and the more junior army and navy officers, reacted fiercely against the national leaders whom they condemned for bringing the land to catastrophe. In the early hours of the 15th, gangs of soldiers and civilians attacked and burned the residences of high officials such as Suzuki, Hiranuma, and Kido. Near the heart of Tokyo, a band of extremists seized Atago hill, until compelled to yield on the 22nd. All killed themselves with hand grenades. On 17th August, an armed group of recalcitrant signal troops from Mito came to the capital and encamped at the Ueno art museum. Loyal units broke up the smallscale insurgency; whereupon the young officers committed suicide, and the men went back on the 20th. In neighboring Saitama prefecture, military prep school cadets seized transmitter stations for most of a day and

interfered with broadcasts by Radio Tokyo. The commandant of the school induced these young diehards to give up. Other disturbances were reported from Matsue, where on 24th August some forty armed civilians (led by youngsters of twenty or less, and including ten women) attacked the prefectural government building and tried to storm the radio station, post office, power station, and newspaper offices. Local police managed to suppress the dissidents. The populace did not support these isolated and disconnected incidents.

More importantly, however, there were reports of potential danger from units in Kyushu (where masses of ground and air defenders were waiting to meet an invasion) and from the Atsugi air base near Tokyo (where Allied occupation forces were expected by 26th August). Although all aerial operations were to have been suspended as from the 14th, Vice-Admiral Ugaki, the 5th Air Fleet commander,





Below left: Symbol of surrender: thousands of Japanese swords are cut in half and melted down. Above: Invader becomes tourist. Below: Life in a bombed city





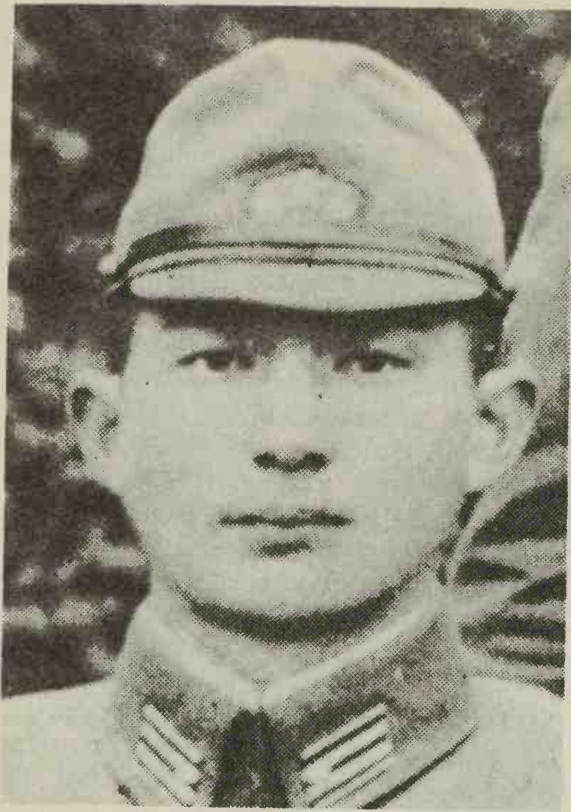
defied the surrender rescript and led an unauthorized suicide sortie by eleven planes against enemy shipping in the Okinawa region. No aircraft returned. At Oita airdrome, Ugaki's successor promptly separated units from weapons. Hotheaded naval air force elements at Atsugi took off and dropped inflammatory leaflets demanding continuation of hostilities. The surrender proclamation, they claimed, was not the true will of the Emperor but the work of traitors. Eighty-three officers and noncoms refused to obey further orders; thereupon the authorities ordered the fuel tanks drained and the propellers removed. But despite personal appeals by a royal prince and other senior officers, the rebels managed to commandeer twenty-three planes and fly to Saitama prefecture, where they

hoped to incite army air units to support them. Not until 25th August, at the 'eleventh hour,' did all of the diehards surrender.

While a relatively few Japanese thus broke under the strain and sought recourse in violence, others found release, expiation, or 'safety' in suicide. Shortly after General Anami committed ceremonial suicide early on the 15th, the vice-chief of NGS and organizer of the first *kamikaze* special-attack units, Admiral Onishi, killed himself. Suicides by other high-ranking military and civil officials continued from August into the autumn and winter: the Eastern District Army commander, General Tanaka, on 24th August; Marshal and Mrs Sugiyama, on 12th September; General Honjo, on 20th November; Prince Konoye, on 16th December. Tojo bungled a suicide attempt when American military police came to arrest him on 11th September. According to one Japanese estimate, more than a thousand

Left: Banknotes are counted during post-war inflation. **Below:** Fraternization, which often led to marriage





Major Koga



Major Hatanaka



Shigenori Togo



Baron Hiranuma



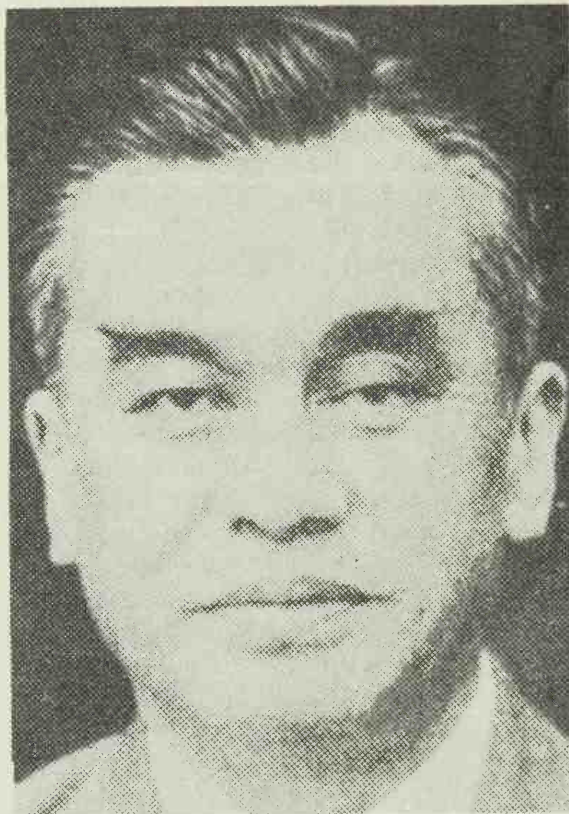
Hiroshi Shimomura



Admiral Toyoda



Chamberlain Irie



Hisatsune Sakomizu

officers and men had committed suicide by the end of summer; there were several instances of mass suicide by members of patriotic and nationalistic societies. According to the records of national police headquarters, 27,048 men and women were reported to have killed themselves in 1945 and 1946, of whom 5,102 gave 'disillusionment with life' as their reason.

The overwhelming majority of the weary and bewildered Japanese people, however, greeted the news of war's end with dull apathy and shocked disillusionment, accepting the inevitable with a confused resignation bordering on spiritual paralysis. At the individual level, air-raid survivors reacted with private relief that the bombings had ended, that the blackout was over, that uninterrupted nights of sleep would now be possible. The novelist Kawabata calls it a period 'when time itself had died, had been lost; when people were caught in the turmoil of seeing their national and individual past, present and future confused and disorganized. For many it was like being engulfed by a frenzied whirlpool'. The forlorn scenery appalled the senses: the sour scorched smell of ruins, the oppressive stillness, the petrified landscape of doom, the garish rust that daubed tangled scraps of metal left from a city made mostly of wood. Describing the unrecognizable and misshapen face of once-beautiful Tokyo, a Japanese writer noted that 'the limitless acres of ruin seemed to spread everywhere, like a desert, in a drab and monotonous panorama of hopelessness'. Kato observes that, 'instead of the industrious activity usually to be seen in the streets of Tokyo . . . there were everywhere idle groups of people, huddling together in the ruins of a once great city, watching the sky and the passers-by, waiting for what might happen next . . . Tears were soon over. There were only vacant, dull stares for many days'.

In this atmosphere of apathy and gloom, Prince Higashikuni replaced

Suzuki as premier on 17th August. Beset by numerous and highly critical problems, the new government possessed only the advantages of Japanese resiliency and loyalty to the Emperor. The latter reassured the populace that, 'having been able to safeguard and maintain the structure of the Imperial state, We are always with ye, Our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity'. IGHQ promptly advised all senior field commanders that, in accordance with the Imperial will, it was imperative that all forces 'act in such a way that no dishonor shall be brought to their glorious traditions and splendid record of meritorious services, and that future generations of our race shall be deeply impressed'.

Effective measures taken by the Japanese High Command thwarted any hopes by cliques of conspirators that unified military rejection of the capitulation was still possible. There would occur isolated and potentially serious instances of army and navy defiance of the central authorities' will, but the command was able to maintain discipline by drawing upon the traditional sense of fealty to the Throne. Thus the ugliest eventualities were avoided, despite popular nervousness and military displeasure. Widely heard was the rallying cry, 'Reverent obedience to the rescript'. In the homeland, the government formed a central liaison office to handle prospective relations with the Allied forces of occupation. Reception committees were established at the points where occupation elements were expected to land. The advance party of Americans landed by air at Atsugi on the morning of 28th August. General Douglas MacArthur flew in on the 30th. At 9am on 2nd September, the definitive instrument of surrender was signed without difficulty aboard USS *Missouri* anchored in Tokyo bay. As one historically sensitive Japanese observer

Correspondents inspect a haul of diamonds found by the occupying forces

wrote, 'The fleet eerily resembled Perry's "black ships" which opened Japan almost a century ago'.

Clausewitz's 'worst condition' was now real for defeated Nippon.

By the summer of 1945, Japan presented an ambivalent and fractionalized picture. On the surface, the army chiefs and certain civilian leaders still spoke of death-defying holy war by a resolute 100,000,000 subjects wielding staves and bamboo spears. Thought police hounded and terrorized individuals suspected of harboring peace-mongering views. Still, as the Emperor had already sensed - and intimidated - Japanese intentions did not all accord with Japanese capabilities by now. 'Last battle' meant just that. Since the Japanese army knew fundamentally that the overall fortunes of the war could not be reversed, their concept contained the meaning of a glorious last farewell. As the chief of staff of the Twelfth Area Army admitted later, the decisive homeland battle might well have proved to be nothing more than 'sand castles' symbolized by the crumbling defenses at Kujukurihama beach.

Nevertheless, the specter of 'dis-

graceful' unconditional surrender and of the feared impairment of the national polity led to protraction of the war into the essentially unnecessary disasters of August 1945. The attitude toward safeguarding of the country's identity is described by Kido: 'I knew very well that, at that stage, it was impossible to guarantee the security of the Imperial family and the protection of the national structure, even by seeking to negotiate peace terms. But, although Japan could survive even on republican principles, continuity and tradition were vital. We must avoid generating turmoil at war's end; for this reason, the Imperial institution had to be maintained. This point had to be emphasized even after surrender . . . Still, I must confess that I was terribly anxious about how the Allied powers would view the need for upholding the national polity. Would our chances be fifty-fifty? . . . The army and the navy seemed to be resisting, out of obstinacy . . .'

The conclusion is inescapable that the will to resist on the part of the Japanese political leaders collapsed well before the will of the people as a



whole, but that the chiefs were unwilling or unable to move too far ahead of public opinion. His Majesty was not unaware of the problems of the 'doves' versus the 'hawks'. Much later, he told a senior chamberlain that, if the subject of peace had been mentioned publicly in the midst of the hostilities, the country would have been torn by civil war, with consequences much more disastrous than those of the mutiny of 1936. The chamberlain says that, at the time, he personally believed that anyone who even mentioned the word 'peace,' would have been killed immediately by the military, no matter who he was, statesman or soldier. Hence the Emperor's wish to stop the war had to be nurtured covertly, and his inner distress was profound. Only Kido has said that the sovereign discussed the subject of peace, in so many words, with him privately; but even the Lord Keeper, it will be recalled, was not known publicly as a 'dove'.

We do know that a surprising number of important Japanese leaders and officers were well acquainted with the realities of a catastrophic situation, but dared not voice their true sentiments openly. Some officials were of the opinion that 'to say what we thought would have been to cut off our noses to spite our faces'. Others felt that 'our mouths could not speak what our "stomachs" felt; had we laid bare our hearts and revealed our firm beliefs, we would never have been able to achieve our goal of peace'. Yet inwardly, as Kawai has put it, 'although traditional controls largely stifled overt expressions of defeatism, the horrors of the last few months of the war had reduced many of the Japanese to an inner state bordering on panic . . . They were disillusioned, demoralized, and paralyzed'. Japan's *de facto* defeat was manifested by the hundreds of thousands of homeless and hungry urban survivors, squatting in shanties put together from the rubble of air raids, or sleeping in train stations or under trestles. The coun-

Allied prisoners of war, looking remarkably well-fed, celebrate their liberation

try's pygmy economy was prostrate and the prospects bleak, while the noose of the air and sea blockade grew even tighter, and full-scale invasion was expected momentarily.

What part did the nuclear weapons play in Japan's decision to end the war? A lieutenant-colonel in the war ministry says that 'the members of the Imperial family appeared to have been shaken extremely by the atomic bomb. We presumed these facts greatly influenced the minds of the advocates of peace'. The very well placed director of the AGS intelligence bureau, General Arisue, judges that 'the final victory would have been in the hands of the American army even without the atomic bomb. However, if the fear of atomic warfare had not existed and if Japan had had a strong will to fight until the end, I believe the American invasion of Japan proper could have been repulsed once. If a fatal blow could have been inflicted upon the American army in this one invasion and thereby have caused a breakdown in the war spirit of the American people, the Japanese could have met the end of the war with a reasonable advantage. However, this problem is considered without the existence of the atomic bomb'.

It required a heterogeneous and complicated constellation of native talents - from Suzuki to Togo to Yonai and, of course, Anami - to combine somehow to save Japan from the complete catastrophe promised her by General Curtis Le May: 'We had two or three weeks of work left on the cities, a bit more to do on precision targets, and were just getting started on transportation. Another six months and Japan would have been beaten back into the dark ages . . .' Even the Japanese have called the termination of the war a kind of euthanasia, a merciful end to the visible pain and the secret fears.



Dramatis Personae

The term Imperial Prince refers to the younger brothers of the Emperor; the term Royal Prince is used for Princes of the Blood. After the war the Royal Princes all became commoners, leaving only the close Imperial Family, including the Imperial Princes, with rank.

AKIHITO, CROWN PRINCE: First son of Emperor; born December 1933.

ANAMI, GENERAL KORECHIKA: Born 1887; War Minister, 7th April-15th August 1945.

ARAO, COLONEL OKIKATSU: Chief Military Affairs Section, War Ministry.

ARISUE, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SEIZO: Director, Intelligence Bureau, AGS, August 1942-; Lieutenant General from March 1945.

BAGGE, WIDAR: Swedish Minister to Japan, March 1937-.

FUJIWARA, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IWAICHI: Served in Malaya and Burma operations; final post Senior Staff Officer, Fifty-Seventh Army, West Japan.

GREW, JOSEPH C: American Ambassador to Japan, 1932-1942; then Under Secretary of State and/or Acting Secretary of State to 1945.

HATA, FIELD-MARSHAL SHUNROKU: Commander in Chief, Second General Army, Hiroshima from 1945.

HATANAKA, MAJOR KENJI: Military Affairs Section, Ministry of War.

HATTORI, COLONEL TAKUSHIRO: Chief, Operations Section, AGS, October 1943; Commander 65th Infantry Regiment, China, from February 1945.

HAYASHI, COLONEL SABURO: Military Secretary to Minister of War Anami, April 1945-.

HIGASHIKUNI, PRINCE: General; born 1887; Commander in Chief, General Defence Command, December 1941; Councillor of State, April 1945; Prime Minister, August 1945.

HIRANUMA, BARON KI'ICHIRO: President, Privy Council, 1936-1939 and 5th April-14th December 1945.

HIROHITO, EMPEROR; born 1901; son of Emperor Taisho; married 1924 Princess Nagako Kuni; Regent 1921-1926; succeeded 1926.

HIROTA, KOKI: Senior Statesman; Foreign Minister, 1933-1936, 1937-1938; Prime Minister 1936-1937.

HONJO, GENERAL SHIGERU: Commanding General, Kwantung Army, August 1931-August 1932; Chief Imperial Aide de Camp, April 1933-April 1936.

IBUSE, MASUJI: Novelist; born 1898.

IDA, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MASATAKA: Military Affairs Section, Ministry of War.

IIMURA, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JO: Commander, Tokyo Defence Army, June 1945, and Commander, Tokyo Divisional District, July 1945.

IKEDA, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SUMIHISA: Director, Combined Planning Board, July 1945.

INABA, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MASAO: Military Affairs Section, Ministry of War.

INOUCHI, CAPTAIN (IJN) RIKIHEI: Air Staff Officer, Naval General Staff.

ISHIWARA, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL KANJI: Commander, 16th Division, September 1939–March 1941; retired thereafter.

KASE, TOSHIKAZU: Foreign Ministry diplomat; section chief, Bureau of American Affairs; Secretary to Togo and to Shigemitsu during their Foreign Ministerships; postwar Ambassador to United Nations.

KATO, MASUO: Domei News Agency correspondent.

KAWABE, GENERAL MASAKAZU: Commissioned 1907; full General, March 1945; Commander Air General Army, April 1945.

KAWABE, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL TORASHIRO: Commissioned 1912; Deputy Chief of Army General Staff, April 1945–.

KAWAI, KAZUO: prewar UCLA professor; Editor, *Nippon Times*, 1941–1949.

KAYA, PRINCE: born 1900; older brother of Princes Higashikuni and Asaka; Lieutenant-General 1943.

KIDO, MARQUIS KOICHI: born 1889; Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, June 1940–.

KOISO, GENERAL KUNIAKI: born 1880; commissioned 1901; General 1937; Prime Minister, with Yonai, July 1944–April 1945.

KONOYE, PRINCE FUMIMARO: born 1891; Prime Minister, June 1937–January 1939, July 1940–July 1941, July–October 1941.

KOZUKI, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL KIYOSHI: Commander First Army, North China, August 1937–July 1938.

LOZOVSKY, SOLOMON: Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs under Molotov.

MAKINO, COUNT NOBUAKI: born 1861; Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, 1925–1935.

MALIK, YAKOV G: Soviet Ambassador to Japan, 1942–1945; postwar delegate to United Nations Security Council and Ambassador to Great Britain.

MATSUDAIRA, MARQUIS YASUMASA: Chief Secretary to Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kido.

MATSUMOTO, SHUN'ICHI: born 1897; Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, May 1945–.

MATSUTANI, COLONEL MAKOTO: Chief, War Direction Section, AGS, October 1943–July 1944; ADC to War Ministers Sugiyama and Anami; First Private Secretary to Prime Minister Suzuki, April 1945–.

Dramatis Personae

MAZAKI, GENERAL JINSABURO: born 1876; General, 1933; Inspector-General, January 1934-July 1935; retired March 1936.

MIKASA, PRINCE Lieutenant-Colonel: born 1915, fourth son of Emperor Taisho.

MIYAZAKI, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SHU'ICHI: Director, Operations Bureau, AGS, December 1944-.

MOLOTOV, VYACHESLAV: Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

MORI, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL TAKESHI: Commander, 1st Imperial Guards Division, April 1945-.

MUTO, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL AKIRA: Chief, Military Affairs Bureau, War Ministry, September 1939-April 1942; Chief of Staff to Yamashita, Fourteenth Area Army, Philippines, October 1944.

NAGANO, FLEET ADMIRAL OSAMI: Chief of Naval General Staff, April 1941-February 1944.

NASHIMOTO, PRINCE: born 1874; Field-Marshal, 1932; Chief Priest of Grand Shrines of Ise, 1937-.

OBATA, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL BINSHIRO: Director, Operations Bureau, AGS, 1932; Deputy Commandant, Army War College, 1935-1936; retired 1936.

OBATA, COLONEL KAZUYOSHI: Supply Staff Officer, Eighteenth Army November 1942-April 1944.

OKADA, ADMIRAL KEISUKE: Prime Minister, July 1934-March 1936.

OKIDO, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SANJI: Commander, Military Police Forces, October 1944-.

SAKOMIZU, HISATSUNE: Chief Cabinet Secretary to Suzuki, April 1945-.

SATO, NAOTAKE: Ambassador to USSR, February 1942-.

SHIBAYAMA, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL KANESHIRO: Vice Minister of War, August 1944-July 1945; concurrently Chief, Logistics GHQ, May-July 1945; sole Chief of latter from July 1945.

SHIGEMITSU, MAMORU: Foreign Minister, April 1943-July 1944 (Tojo), July 1944-April 1945 (Koiso), August-October 1945 (Higashikuni).

SHIIZAKI, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JIRO: Military Affairs Section, War Ministry.

SHIMORUA, HIROSHI: State Minister under Suzuki, April 1945-.

SHIODA, SHOBEI: Professor of Economics, Tokyo Municipal University.

SOONG, TV: Chinese Nationalist Foreign Minister.

SUGIYAMA, FIELD-MARSHAL GENERAL: War Minister, July 1944-April 1945, under Koiso; Commander, First General Army, April 1945-.

SUZUKI, ADMIRAL KANTARO: born 1867; Admiral 1923; Senior Imperial Aide de Camp, January 1929–March 1936; President, Privy Council, 10th August 1944–5th April 1945; Prime Minister, April–August 1945; died 1948.

TAKAGI, REAR ADMIRAL SOKICHI: Chief, Naval Training Bureau, March–September 1944.

TAKAMATSU, PRINCE: born 1905, third son of Emperor Taisho; Captain (IJN) 1942.

TAKESHITA, LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MASAHIKO: Military Affairs Section, War Ministry.

TANAKA, GENERAL SHIZU'ICHI: Commander, Eastern Army District, March 1945–.

TERAUCHI, FIELD-MARSHAL HISA'ICHI: Commander-in-Chief, Southern Army, November 1941–.

TOGO, SHIGENORI: Foreign Minister, October 1941–September 1942 (Tojo); April–August 1945 (Suzuki).

TOJO, GENERAL HIDEKI: born 1884; Prime Minister (and War Minister, etc.), October 1941–July 1944.

TOYODA, ADMIRAL SOEMU: Chief of Naval General Staff, May 1945–.

UGAKI, VICE-ADMIRAL MATOME: Commander, 5th Air Fleet, February 1945–.

UMEZAKI, HARUO: Novelist; born 1915, died 1965; author of *SAKURAJIMA*.

UMEZU, GENERAL YOSHIJIRO: Chief of Army General Staff, July 1944–.

USHIROKU, GENERAL JUN: Senior Deputy Chief of Army General Staff, February–July 1944; Commander, Third Area Army, Kwantung Army, August 1944–.

WAINWRIGHT, GENERAL JONATHAN: successor to General MacArthur in the Philippines, surrendered 1942.

WAKATSUKI, BARON REIJIRO: Prime Minister, January 1926–April 1927, April–December 1931.

YAMASHITA, GENERAL TOMOYUKI (HOBUN): Commander, Fourteenth Area Army, Philippines, September 1944–.

YONAI, ADMIRAL MITSUMASA: Co-Premier with Koiso, and Navy Minister, July 1944–April 1945; Navy Minister again under Higashikuni, August–October 1945.

YOSHIDA, SHIGERU: Ambassador to Great Britain, April 1936–March 1939; Foreign Minister, September–December 1945; Prime Minister, May 1946–December 1954.

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Ravaged by firebombs and torn by her efforts to provide the manpower, munitions and food to mount a sufficient force to repulse the American invasion, war-weary Japan was determined still to fight – with bamboo spears in the hands of old men if necessary – but finally her leaders knew the truth: Japan had to capitulate or be annihilated.

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